The Complete
Windows 10
Manual

Expert tutorials to improve your skills

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Black Dog Media

Slow Boot Fix Like Windows 8 before it, Windows 10 uses a hybrid boot to enable fast boot times. It sounds great but can actually slow down boot for some users. Disable it by searching for Power Options in the Start menu and running the matching Control Panel applet, then in the left-hand pane click Choose what the power buttons do.
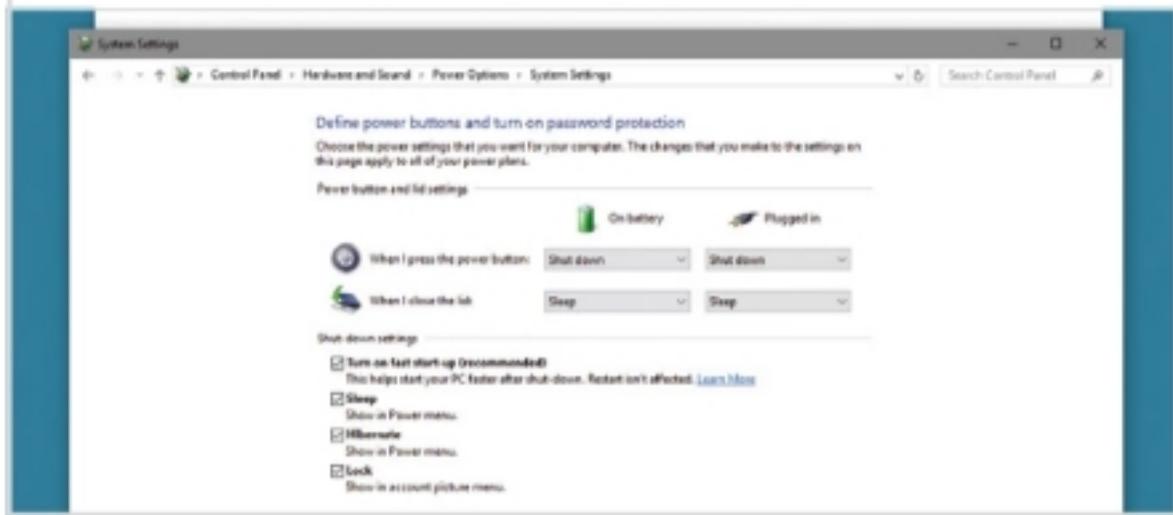
Non-responsive PC Windows 10 has a completely different shell than previous versions. The Explorer.exe process is still at its core but there are a few additional components as well. If you click the Start button and nothing happens or if the entire taskbar refuses to respond to an interaction, open Task Manager (press Ctrl+Shift+Esc), find Windows Explorer in the task list and click the Restart button.
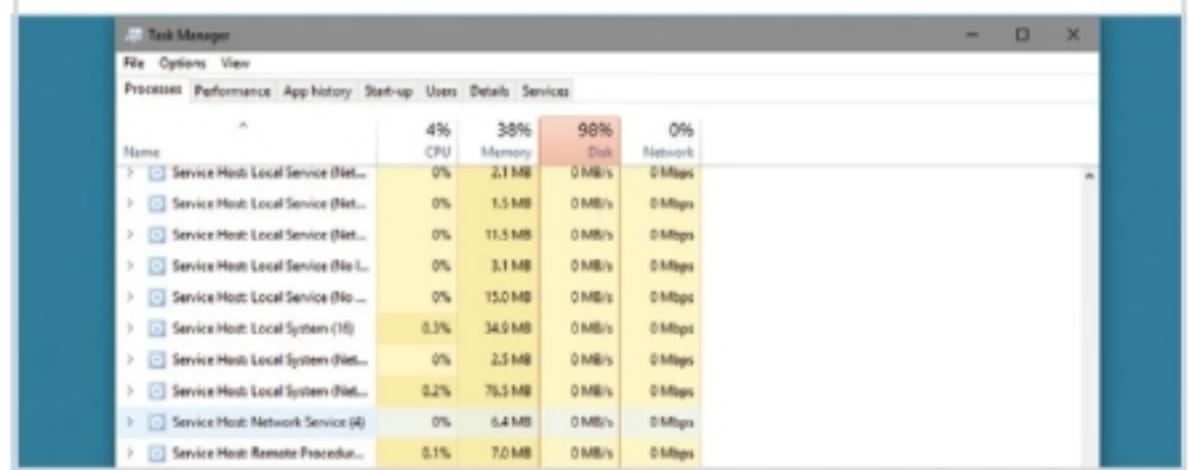
Fresh Installation Tool

If Windows 10 is really giving you problems and you have tried everything else to fix the issue, you can try using the Fresh Install tool. You will lose any installed apps but will keep your files.

Step 1 First make sure you have the following: an Internet connection to download the tool and the Windows 10 image and sufficient available data storage on the computer you are installing on. You need at least 3GB free for the download and the clean Windows 10 image file.
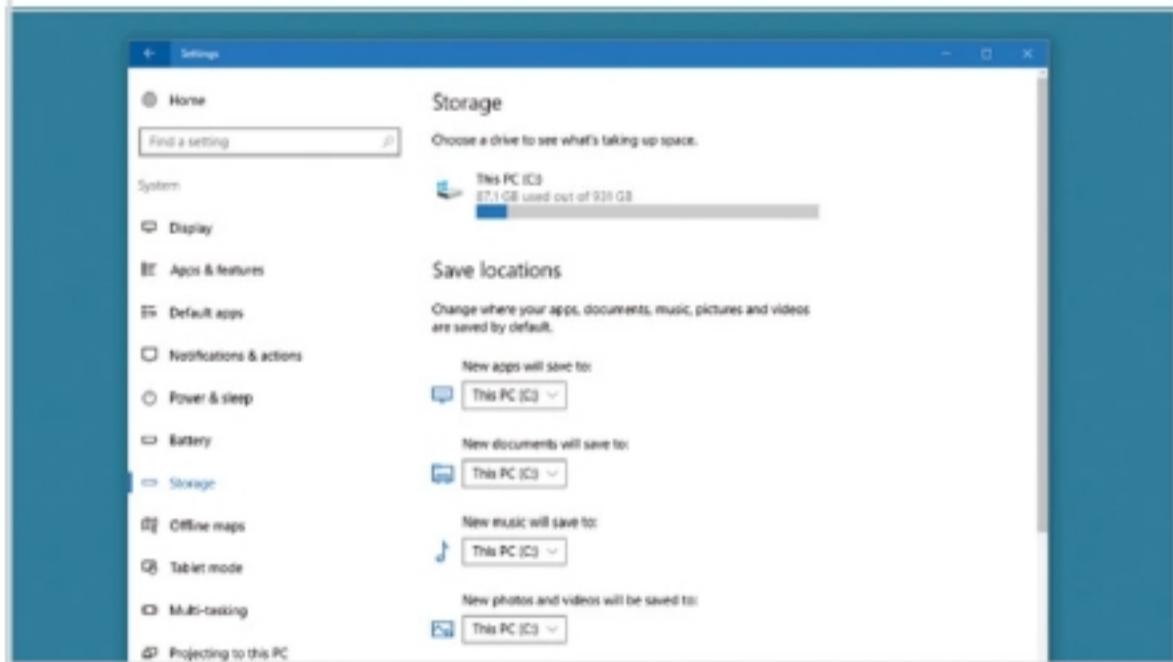
Step 3 BACK UP EVERYTHING you want to keep! Launch the tool and review and accept the licence terms. Choose what you want to keep. If you want to keep your personal files, choose the Keep personal files only option. Select the OK button to start the installation.
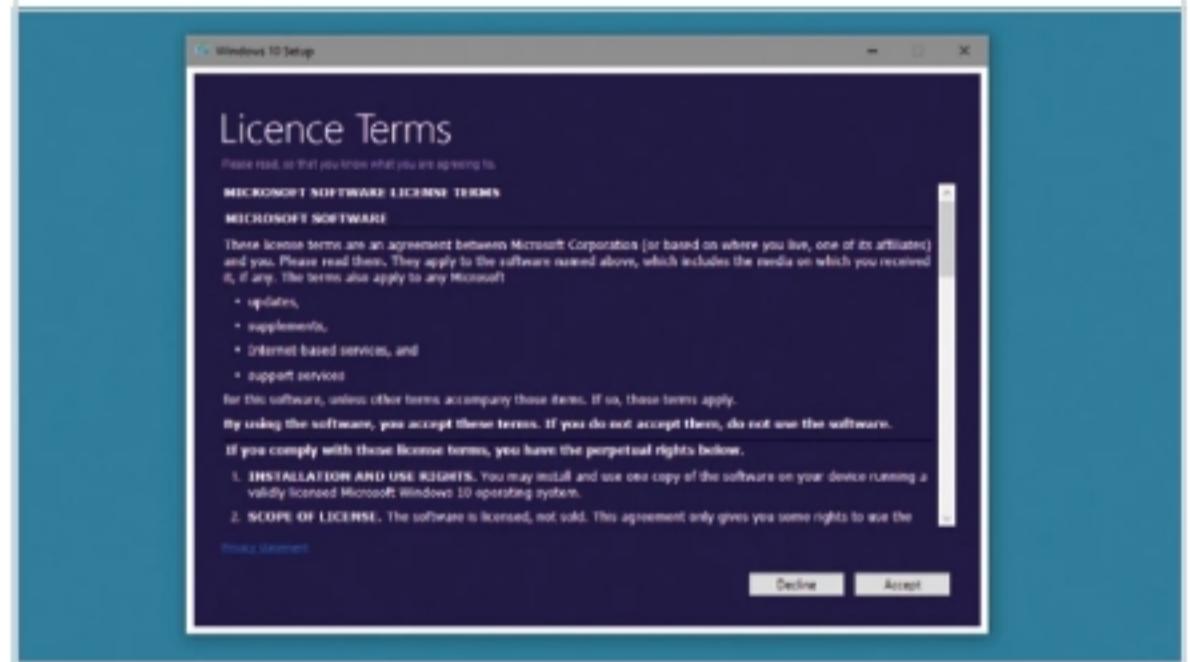
Step 2 Download the tool https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/software-download/windows10startfresh. There is some advice on the download page about retrieving and reinstalling Microsoft software such as Office. It is worth checking this out if you are heavily reliant on that software.
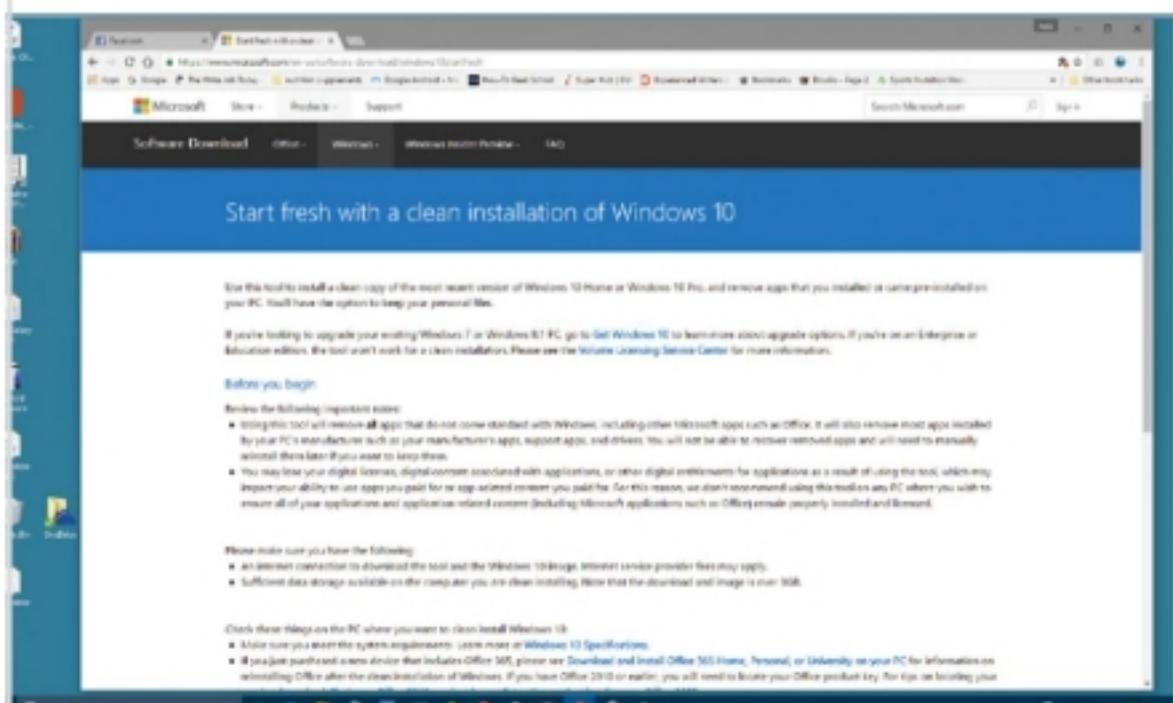
Step 4 By using the tool, you may lose your digital licences, digital content associated with applications or other digital entitlements. Drivers may also be missing. If you experience any missing drivers after the clean installation has finished, go to Settings > Update & security >Windows Update.
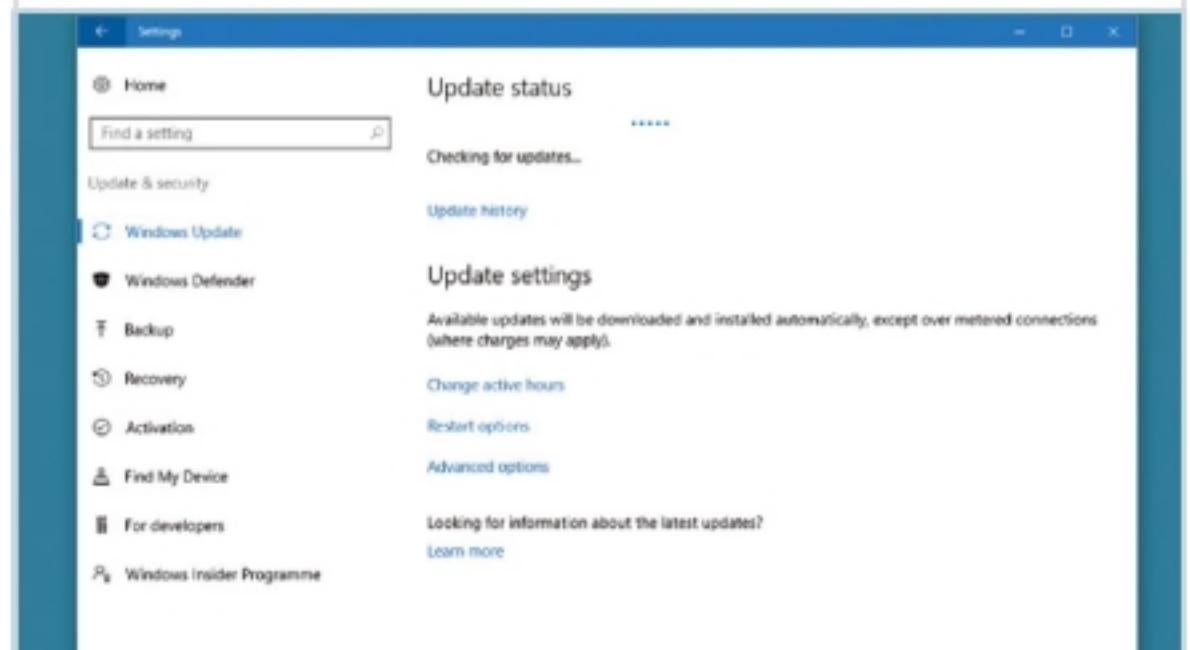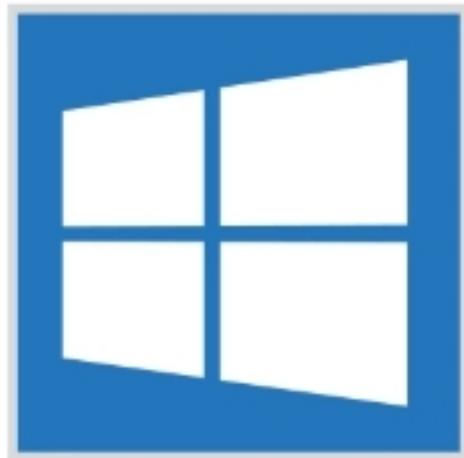
Diagnosing Windows Problems

Windows 10 includes some useful tools for checking on and solving problems but sometimes you need to look a bit further and deeper. Occasionally you just need to go back to basics. These tips will help you solve some common problems encountered in Windows 10.

First Things to Check

If you're having problems with Windows Update, the Windows Update Troubleshooter might be able to automatically fix the problem. Go to Microsoft.com and search for Update Troubleshooter.

Windows Update Troubleshooter

Microsoft knows that things don't always go smoothly when updating and have provided a dedicated troubleshooting tool for use during this key task. If you're having problems with Windows Update, the Windows Update Troubleshooter might be able to automatically fix the problem. Go to Microsoft.com and search for Update Troubleshooter.
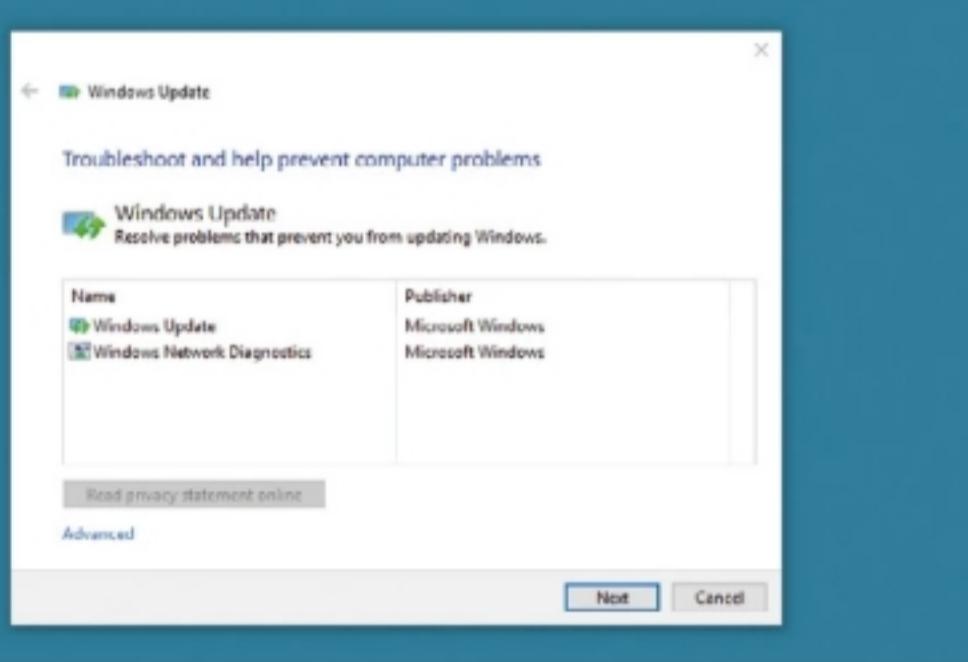
Checking System Spec

If you're having trouble installing or running a particular app or game, it may be that your PC hardware is not up to scratch. All commercial software will provide details of required and (sometimes) recommended specification needed to run it. You can check system spec at any time, just go to Control Panel and select System and Security, then System.
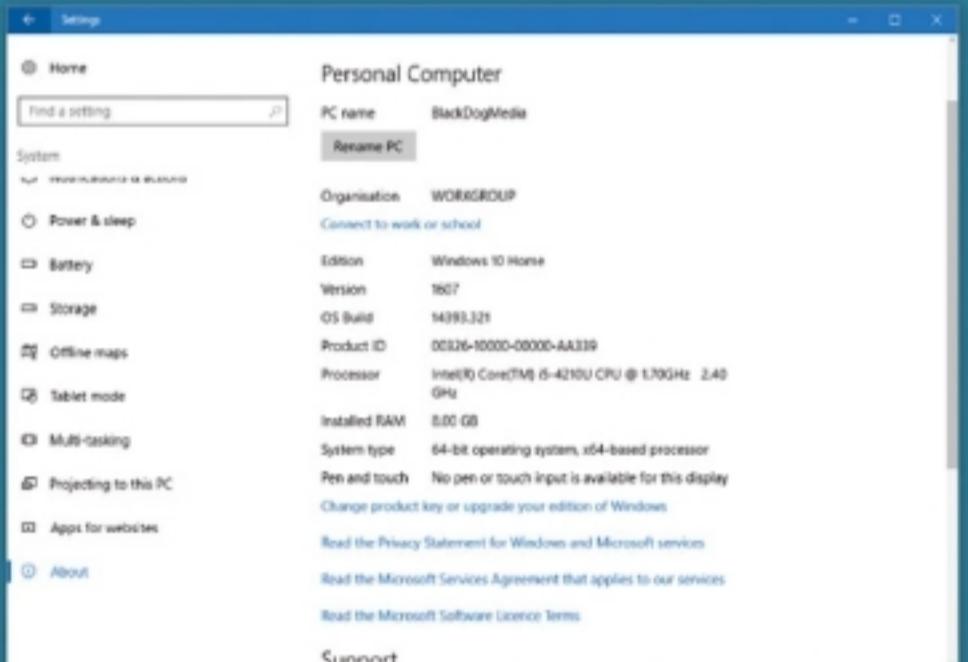
Check for Updates

Keeping your copy of Windows 10 up-to-date with the latest releases can really help to avoid problems before they happen. Press the Windows logo key and click Settings. Then choose Update & security > Windows Update and then select Check for updates. Install any available updates and restart your PC if required.
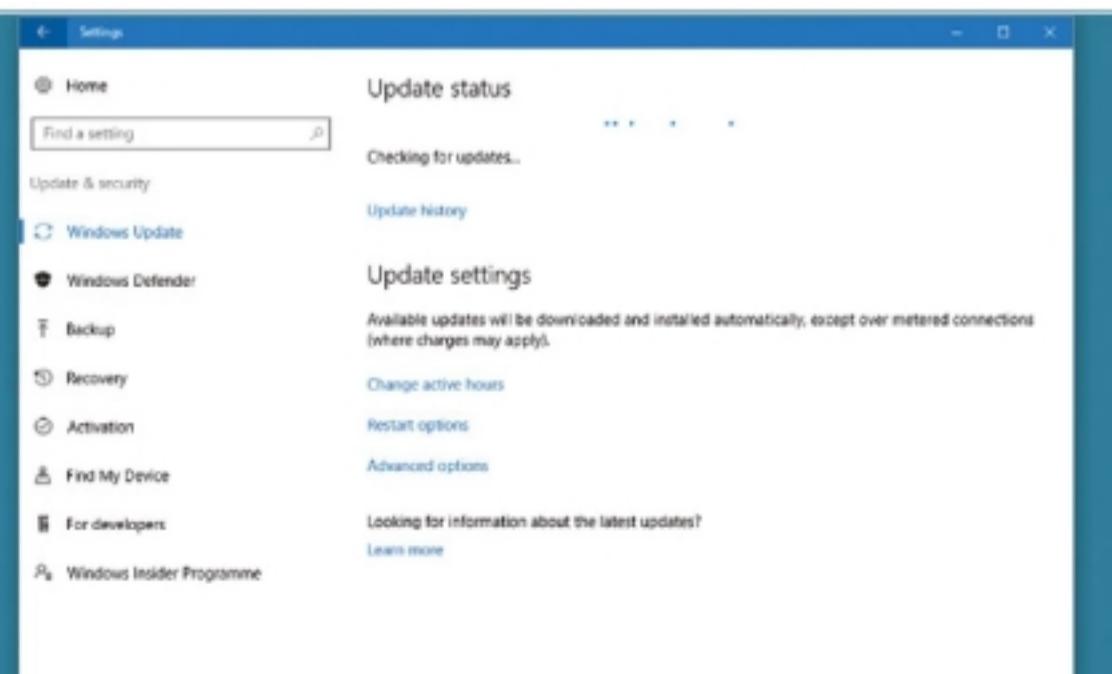
App Updates

If an app or program isn't working with Windows 10, particularly after the Anniversary update, try looking in the Windows Store for an update and if that doesn't work, delete and reinstall it. To check for available app updates on the store, click the user icon next to the search bar and select Downloads and Updates.
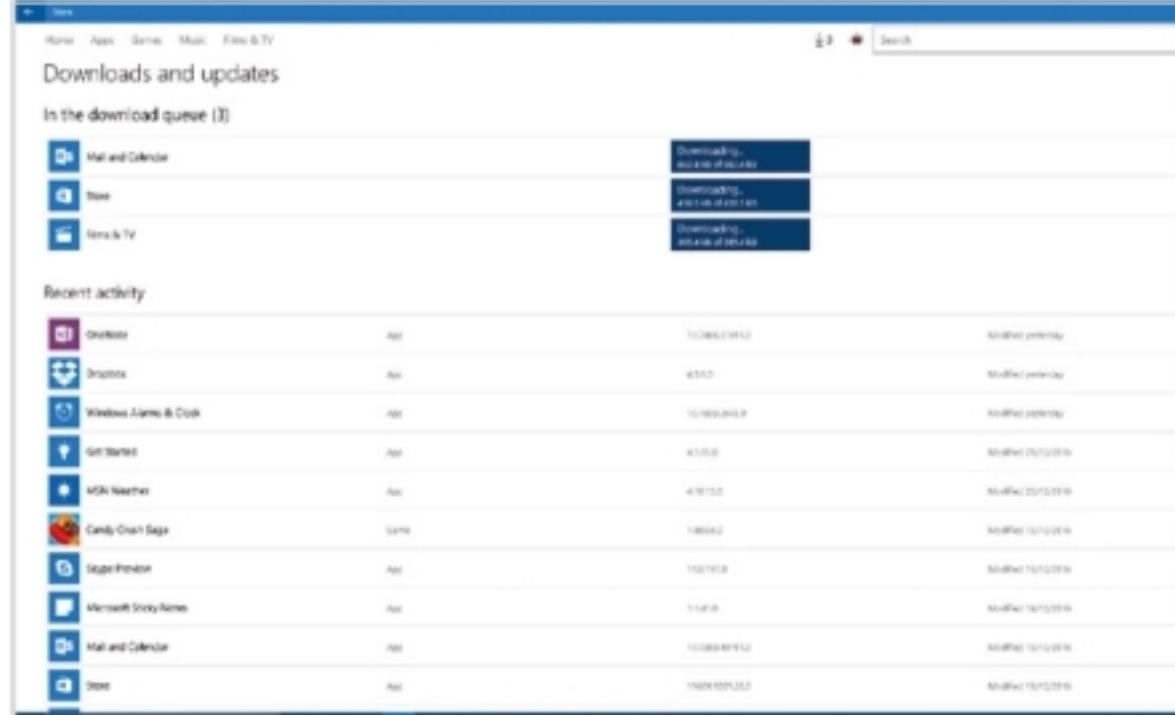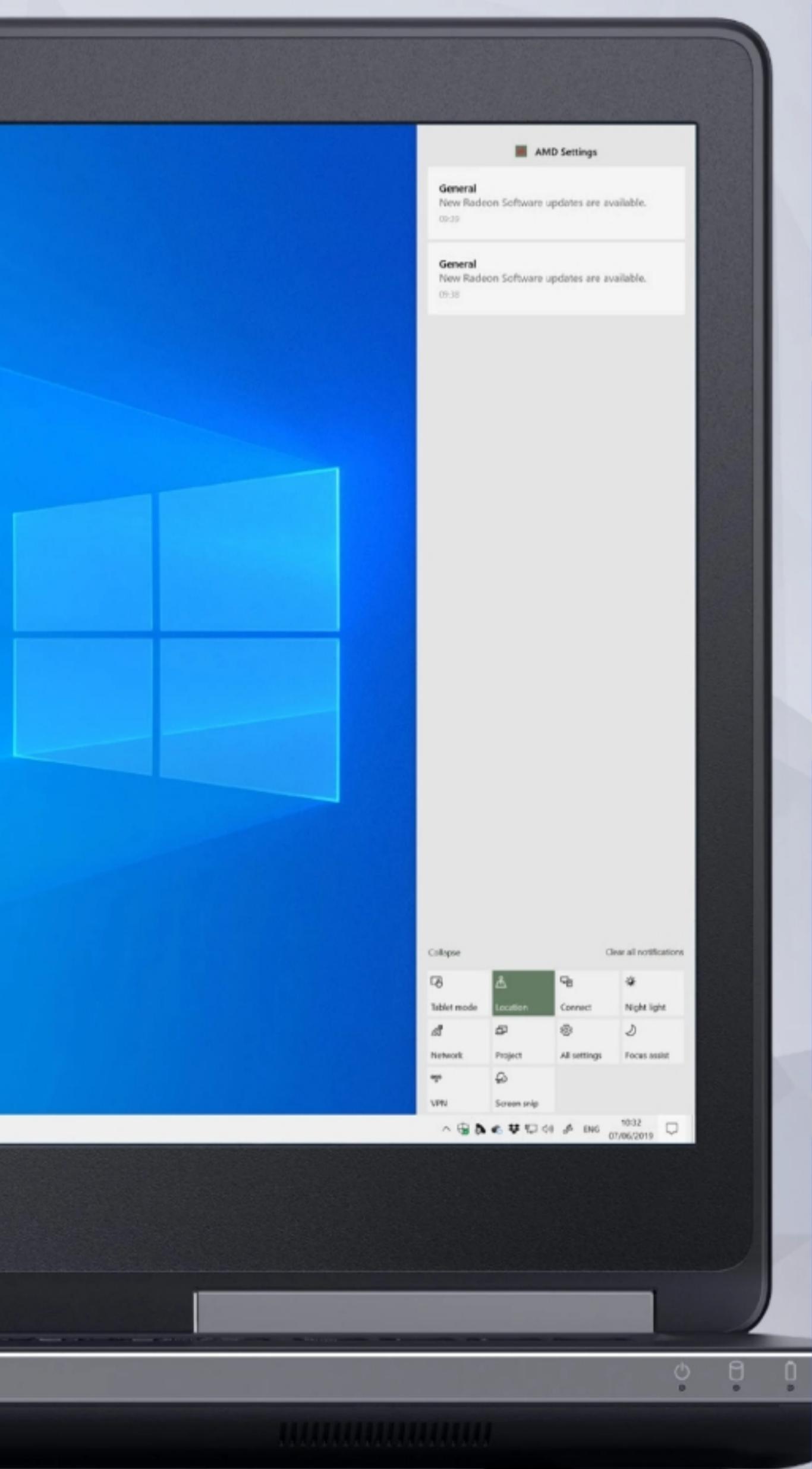
Don't Block Vents

Despite the name, few laptops are actually designed to be used on your lap (or on any soft surface). This is because the heat vents of many laptops are on the bottom, and soft surfaces will often block them. if it happens regularly, this can cause lasting heat damage to the laptop.

Buy a Laptop Stand

If your laptop sits in one place and is rarely moved around, consider buying a laptop stand. These not only help to give you a better screen viewing angle, but they also give the laptop vents some extra clearance and, therefore, better airflow. You can even buy stands with built-in cooling fans.

Don't Overcharge the Battery

Try not to keep your laptop plugged into the mains all the time. Charge it, and then use the battery power until you need to charge it again. This helps to keep the battery in good condition. If you only ever use your laptop at home on a desk, keep it plugged in, but remove the battery.

Close the Lid

When you have finished using your laptop for the day, close the lid. When you are moving your laptop, close the lid. When you leave your laptop for any length of time, close the lid. This not only protects the screen from accidental damage, but it will also help keep your laptop running between charges.

Buy a Good Laptop Bag

If you ever take your laptop with you out of the house, make sure buy and use a decent laptop bag. Go for one that is at least water resistant, if not waterproof, to protect your laptop from rain. Try to buy one that is padded, or even better, has a floating laptop "sling" for better impact protection.

Laptop Care and Maintenance Tips

Laptops are great! They are small, portable and can be easily put away when not in use. They are also increasingly powerful, although they still lag behind a good desktop system unless you pay huge sums of money for them. They are not, however, as robust as a desktop, so good care and maintenance is a must if you want your laptop to last.

Caring for Your Laptop

Some of these tips may seem obvious, and some might not apply to you, but even following a few of these suggestions will help keep your laptop in good shape.

Keep Food and Drink Away

However careful you are when eating and drinking, if you do it while using your laptop it is inevitable that at some point, crumbs and splashes will hit the screen, keyboard, etc. Unlike a desktop, replacing a crumb-filled keyboard on a laptop is not just a case of buying a new one.

Wipe the Screen Carefully

Laptop screens are generally not as clear or bright as a desktop monitor screen, so keeping them clean is important. Use a lint-free cloth regularly to gently wipe away dust and dirt. If there are more stubborn marks, buy and use an LCD screen cleaner. These are cheap to buy online.

Clean the Keys and Ports Regularly

Laptop keyboards are hard to replace, so keep yours clean and free from dust. You can buy small USB keyboard vacuums fairly cheaply, and these can help keep dust from building up. You can also buy keyboard cleaner putty very cheaply online. The same rule applies to the various ports on your laptop.
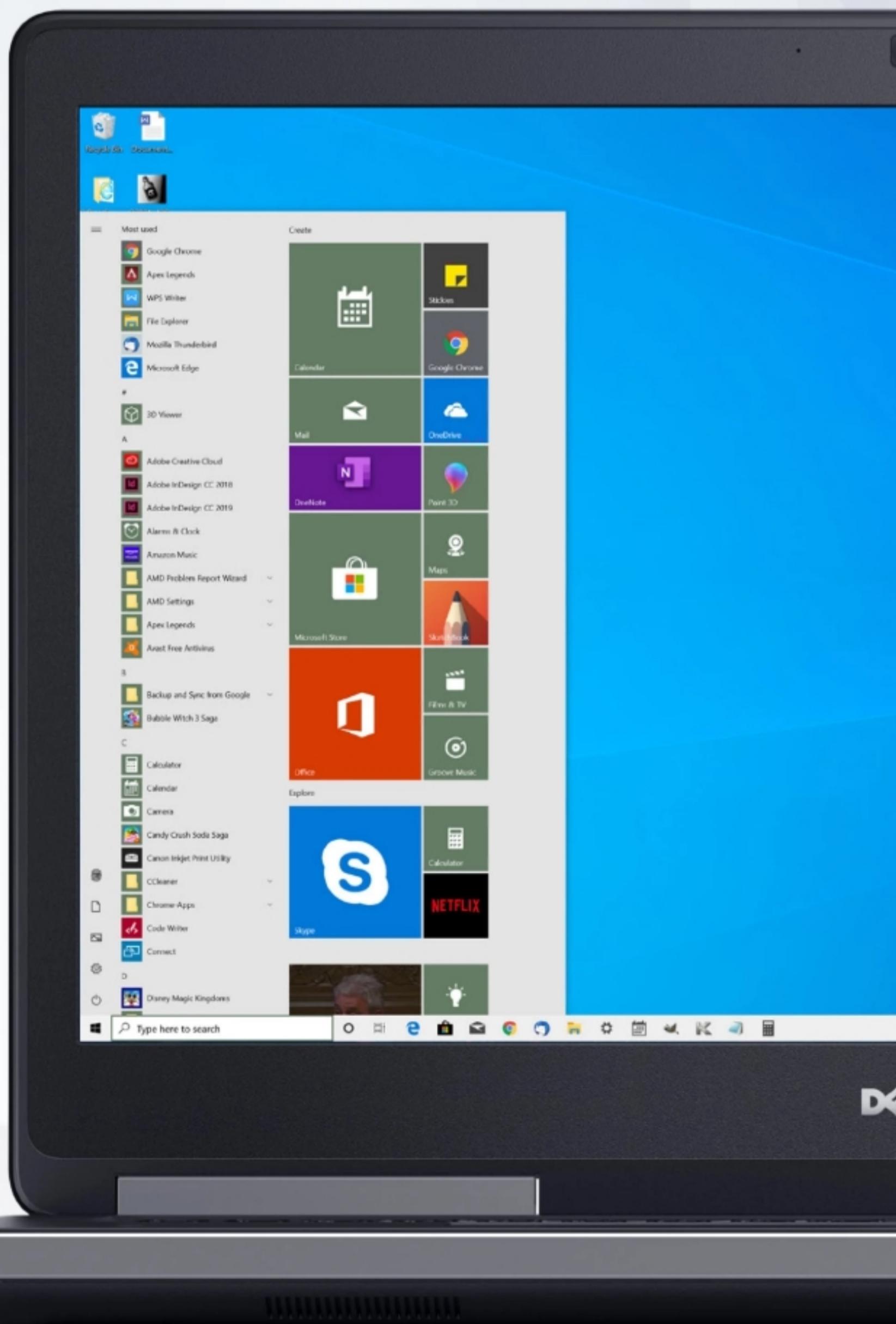
Perform a Fresh Start

Performing a Fresh Start allows you to do a clean reinstallation and update of Windows, while keeping your personal data and most Windows settings intact; an easier option than a full wipe and reinstall.

Step 1 Be aware that Fresh Start will remove most of your apps from your device, so you will have some reinstalling to do. In some cases, a clean installation may improve your device's start-up and shutdown experience, memory usage, Microsoft Store apps performance, browsing experience and battery life.

Step 4 Click Get Started and you will see a UAC (User Account Control) dialog. Click Yes and the Fresh Start screen will appear. This screen provides a brief overview of what the Fresh Start procedure will do. You'll also get a general idea of how long Fresh Start will take to complete the procedure.

Step 2 To find the Fresh Start tool, open the Windows Defender tool (click on the shield icon in the taskbar) and then click on the Performance & Health section. You will need to click on Additional Info and then click Get Started. If Fresh Start has previously been performed, the date will be displayed here.
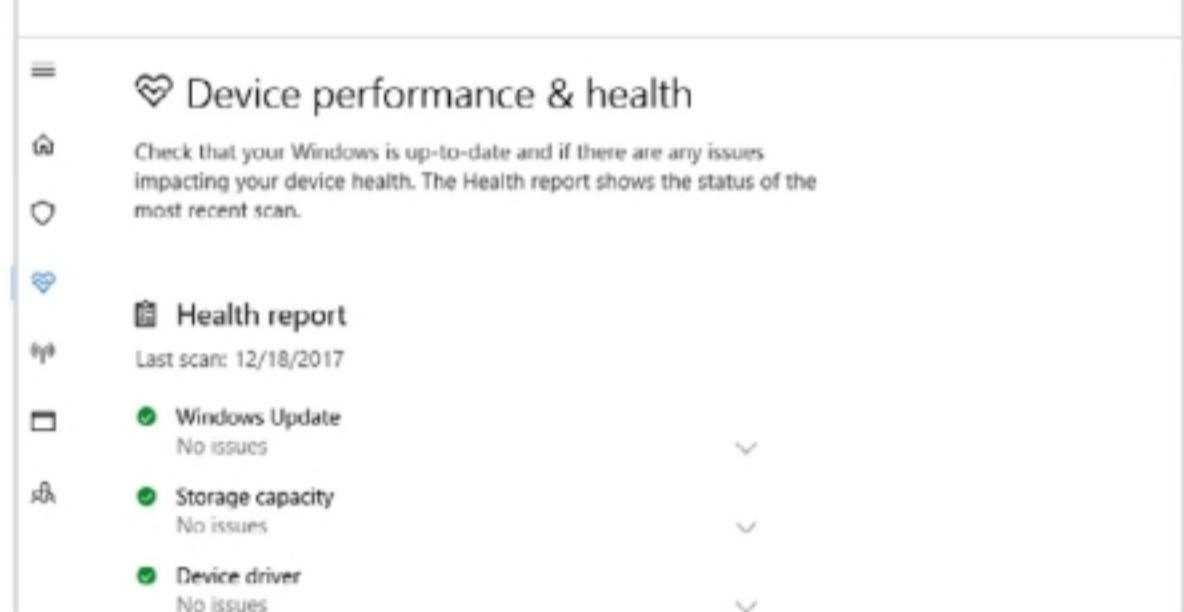
Step 5 The software will analyse your system and then tell you which apps will be removed. There is no need to make a note of these apps, as Fresh Start will save this list and create a file on the desktop of your new, clean Windows 10 installation. Read through the list if you wish, and then click Next.

Step 3 Microsoft recommends that you back up your files before making changes like a clean installation of Windows to your device. Make sure that you have access to all reinstallation media (such as CDs), product keys, license or login information and other materials needed to manually reinstall apps.
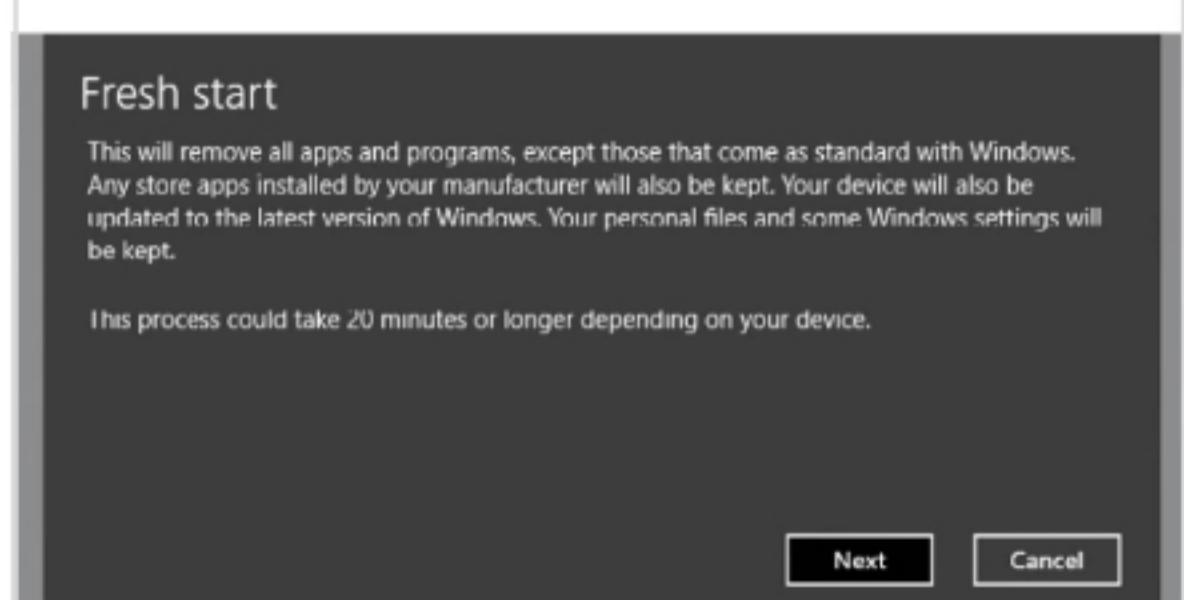
Step 6 A Fresh Start will wipe any previous versions of Windows, so you won't be able to roll back. Click the Start button and wait for the process to complete. Once complete, your PC will restart and the initial setup screens will appear. Removed apps are displayed in an Edge document on the desktop.
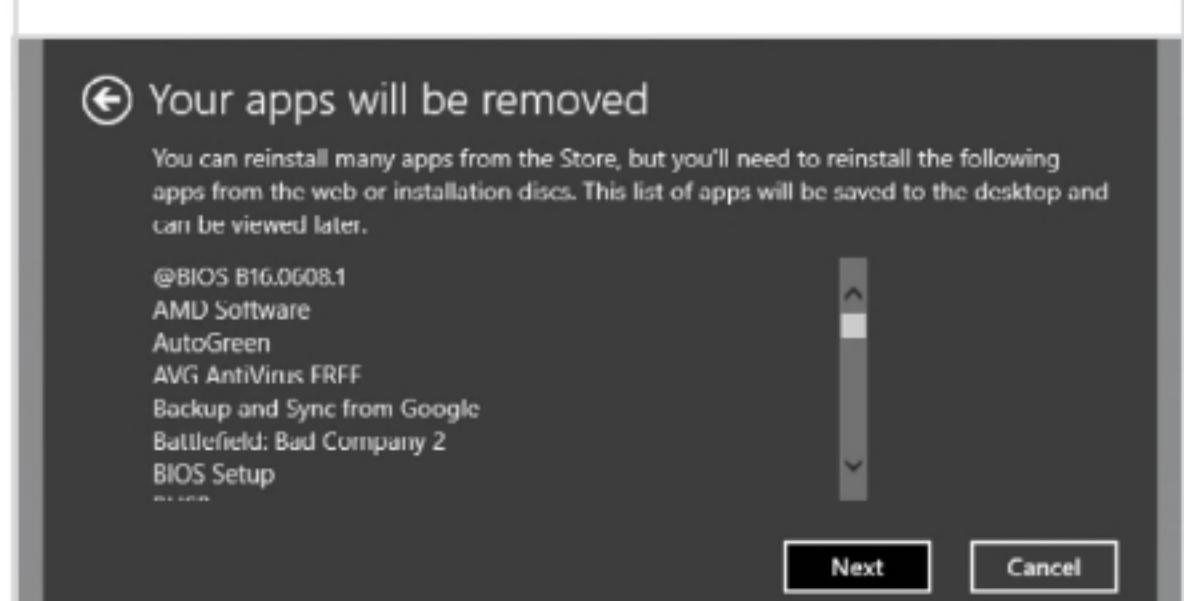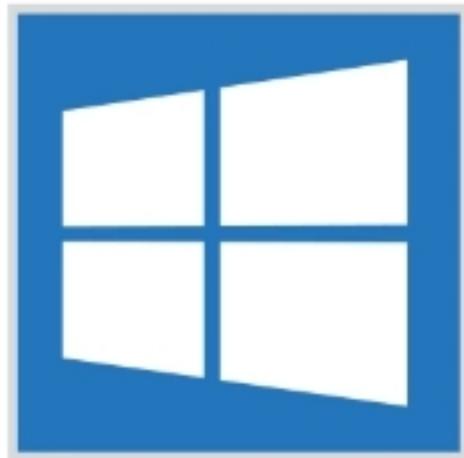
How to Reset or Fresh Start

Resetting a PC reinstalls Windows, with a choice to deletes your files, settings and apps, and main system files. Restoring will undo recent system changes, without deleting files. A Fresh Start completely removes all apps and reinstalls Windows.

Fresh or Reset?

Refreshing and resetting your Windows 10 PC are two very different things and you should always make sure you know which is the best choice to solve your current problem.

Step 1 If your PC isn't performing as well as it once did, and you don't know why, you can reset your PC without deleting any of your personal files or changing your settings. Apps or software not installed through the Store will be removed but Windows store apps will be reinstalled.

Step 2 Open the main Settings app and head in to the Update & Security section. Click on Recovery and you will see several options, including Reset this PC. If you can't get into settings, you can access reset by restarting your computer while holding the Shift key; then select Troubleshoot > Reset.

Step 3 In Settings > Recovery, click on 'Get started' to begin the process. You will now need to choose whether to keep your files (just remove apps and settings) or remove everything. If you choose Remove everything, you will then need to choose whether to 'Remove and clean the drive'.

Step 4 You will be warned that you won't be able to roll back to a previous version of Windows after the reset (old Windows files will be deleted). Click Next and then Reset when prompted. Windows will restart and take several minutes to reset itself. Click Continue when promoted.

4 DISABLE UNNEEDED STARTUP PROGRAMS

Now that you have removed any unwanted apps and software, it is time to check if any remaining apps are running unnecessarily at startup. Many software manufacturers will set their programs to start-up in the background when Windows 10 starts up. This helps the programs to open more quickly and makes sense for software you frequently use, but not for software you only use occasionally.

A quick way to see what software is running in the background is to look at the icons on the right side of the taskbar and open the hidden icons panel by clicking the small arrow. You can hover the mouse over icons to see what they are.

If you want to have a deeper look at which software initiates during startup, open Settings > Apps > Start-up. Here you will see a list of all startup apps, along with an estimation of their performance/speed impact and a slider to prevent each one from starting automatically.
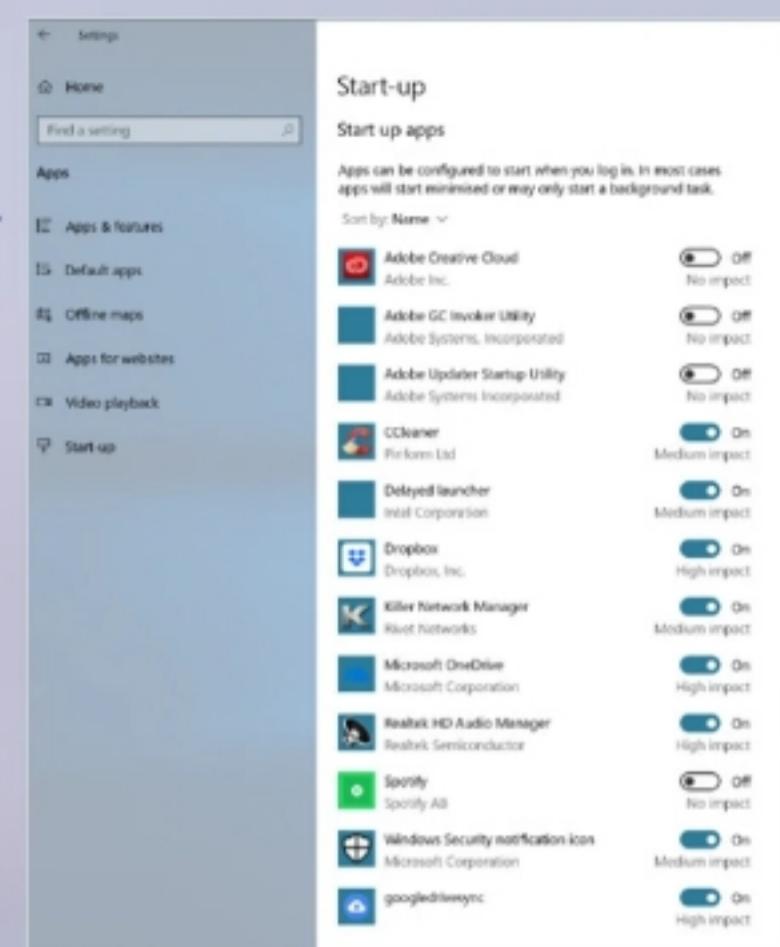
5 SCAN FOR VIRUSES AND MALWARE

Viruses, malware and other malicious software could cause your computer to run slowly or behave strangely. Things to look out for include: unexpected pop-up messages, programs that suddenly start or stop, or the sound of your hard disk constantly working.

To scan for and remove viruses, open Settings > Update & Security > Windows Security (previously Windows Defender) > Open Windows Security, click on "Virus Threats & Protection" and then click the "Quick Scan" button.

You can do a more advanced scan by clicking "Scan options" and choosing which you want to perform. If viruses or malware are found, you will be given options to quarantine and remove them.
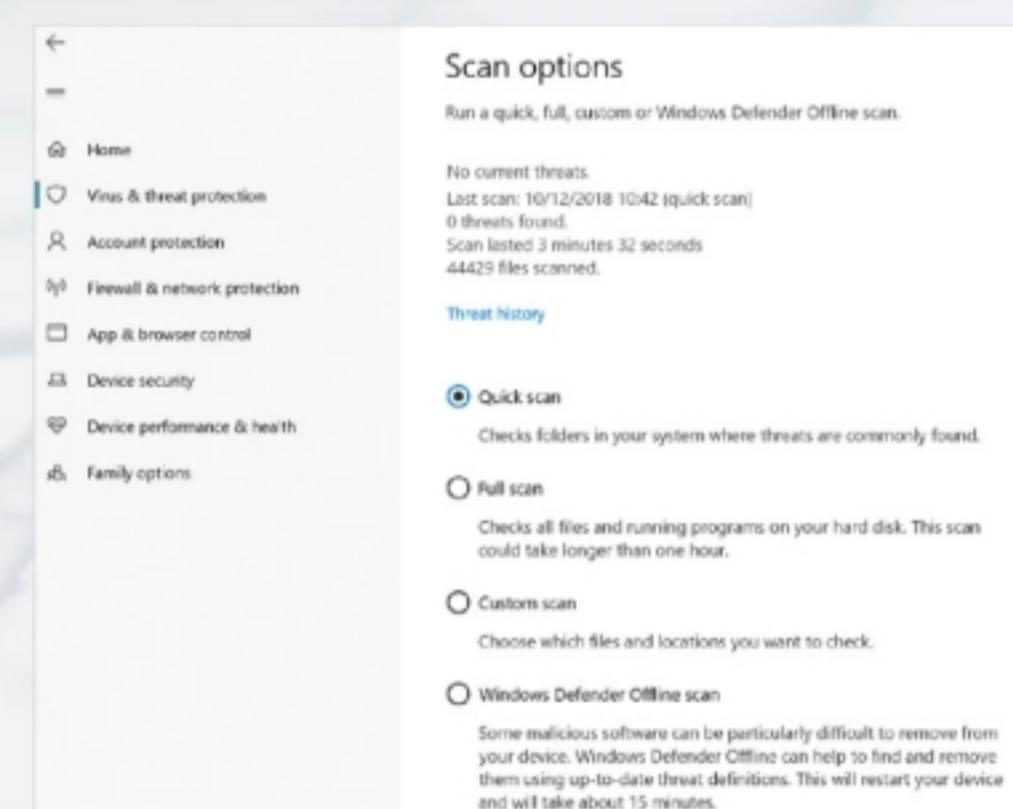
6 CHECK FOR CORRUPTED SYSTEM FILES

Occasionally, the core system files in Windows can become corrupted (for a variety of reasons) and cause performance problems. Windows 10 includes a tool: the Deployment Image Service and Management Tool, that will check for such files and automatically replace them, either with a cached version or by downloading a new version.

Use the DISM Tool – In the Search box in the taskbar, type "powershell". Right-click on "Windows Powershell" in the results and choose "Run as Administrator" from the menu.

At the Command prompt, that opens in the blue Powershell window, type "dism.exe /Online /Cleanup-image /Restorehealth" without the quotation marks (note the space between "dism.exe" and "/" and each switch (/)).

If the tool finds and replaces any corrupted files, restart your computer and see if it has helped with your performance issues.
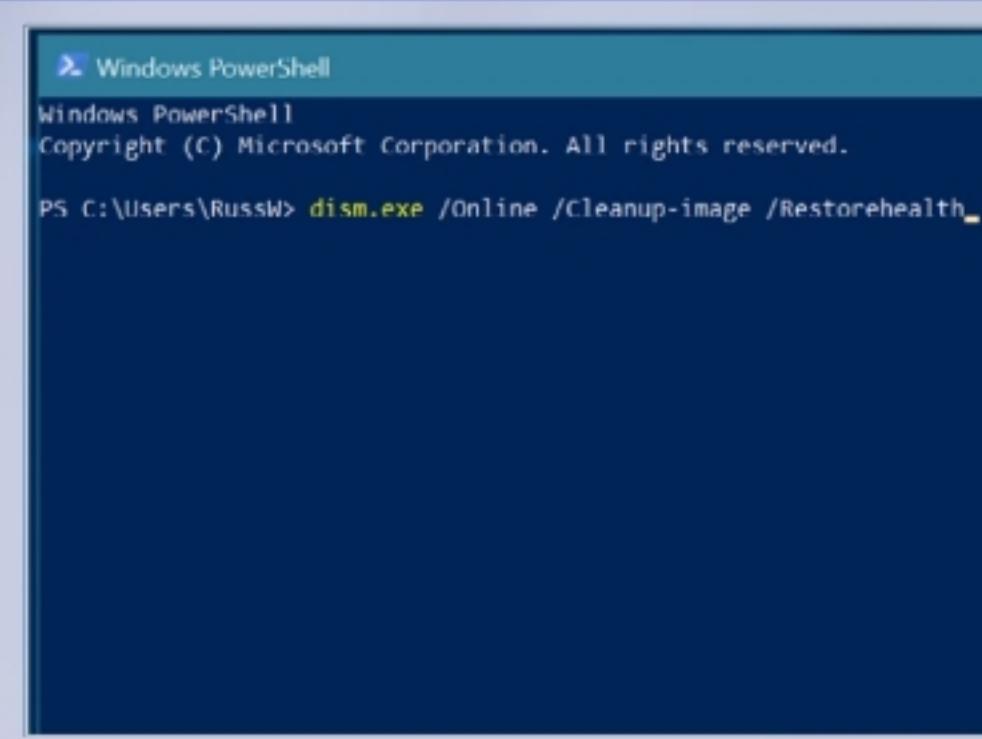
Six Steps to a Faster PC

A slow computer is both inconvenient and frustrating. When everything you try to do takes twice as long as it should, you might be tempted to think about buying a new PC; before you do, there are several things you can try to make your Windows 10 PC run faster and smoother.

1 UPDATE WINDOWS 10 AND DRIVERS

The first step along your path to a faster computer is making sure that the Windows OS and all of the various drivers installed are up to date. Simply updating drivers to the latest versions can have a noticeable effect on the overall loading speed of any PC and fortunately, this is very easy to do.

Open Settings > Update & Security > Windows Update and click "Check for updates". Windows 10 will scan for available updates (to both the OS and drivers), before displaying all those available as a list.

If no updates are available, it will say "Your device is up to date" and you can move on to the next tip.

If updates are available, select those you want to download and install, then click "Install". When installation is complete, restart your PC.

Windows Update

Updates available
Last checked: Today, 11:35

Definition Update for Windows Defender Antivirus - KB2267602 (Definition 1.283.271.0)
Status: Installing - 0%

2018-11 Cumulative Update for Windows 10 Version 1809 for x64-based Systems (KB4469342)
Status: Pending download

Change active hours

View update history

Advanced options
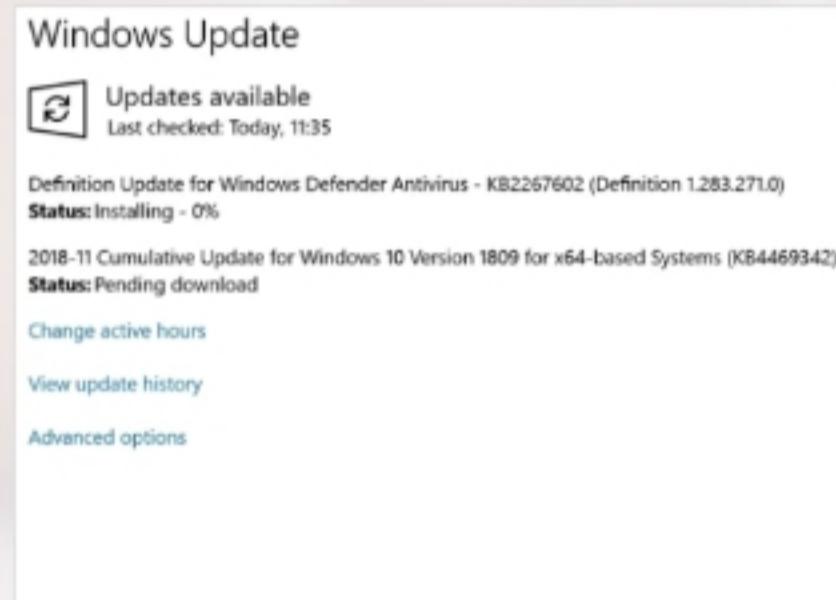
2 CHECK PROGRAM COMPATIBILITY

Software that is designed to run on older versions of Windows can sometimes cause Windows 10 to slow down as it struggles to manage this incompatibility issue. To find out if this is a potential problem, run the Program Compatibility Troubleshooter.

In the taskbar search field, type "program compatibility troubleshooter" and click the first result in the search panel. Run the troubleshooter; testing any software you think is causing problems.

The troubleshooter will offer you various ways to test and fix software compatibility issues.

Program Compatibility Troubleshooter

Select the program you're having problems with

If you can't see your program, select Not Listed to browse to the program file

Not Listed
Adobe Creative Cloud
Adobe InDesign CC 2018
Adobe InDesign CC 2019
AMD Settings
Backup and Sync from Google
CCleaner
Check for WPS Office Updates
Dropbox
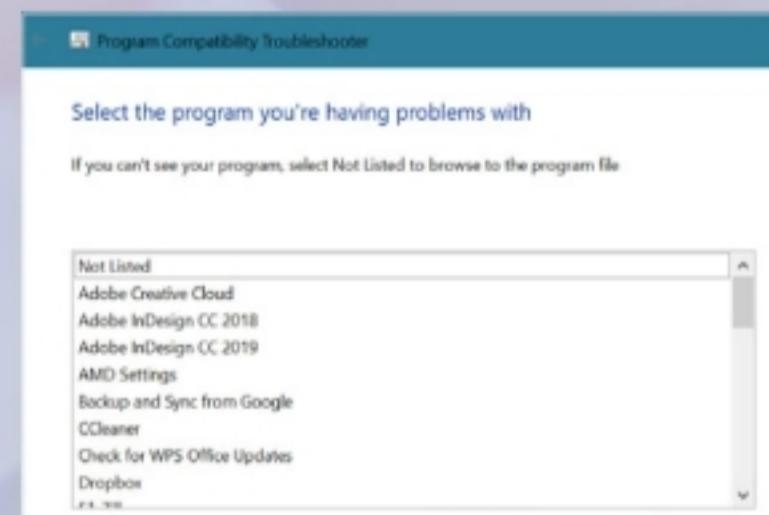
3 CHECK AND CLEAR DISK SPACE

If your hard drive is very full, it can affect performance. To check: open Settings > System > Storage and see how much space you have left. If your storage is looking full, try the following options to make some space:

Delete Temporary Files – Click the "This PC" bar and then click the "Temporary files" bar. Select everything you want to delete, click the "Remove Files" button and then restart your PC.

Remove Unwanted Apps – Open Settings > Apps > Apps & Features, click on any app you want to remove and then click "uninstall". Repeat this for all unwanted or unused apps before restarting.

Move Files to an External Drive – Connect a removable hard drive to your PC (a small USB flash drive for example) and open the File Explorer. Select the files you want to move, click "Move to" in the Home tab at the top and select the external drive. Files will still be instantly accessible as long as the drive is still connected.

Storage

Local storage

This PC (C:) - 1.81 TB
300 GB used   1.71 TB free

USB (F:) - 7.43 GB
4.01 GB used   3.42 GB free

ESD-USB (G:) - 30.0 GB
1.00 GB used   28.7 GB free

Storage sense

Windows can automatically free up space by getting rid of files you don't need, like temporary files and content in your recycle bin

On

Change how we free up space automatically

Free up space now

More storage settings

Change where new content is saved

Step 5 You now need to allow your PC to boot up into the Bitdefender Rescue CD environment. Power up your PC and open the Boot Option Menu; this could be accessed by pressing F12, depending on the make and manufacturer of your PC motherboard. With the boot options available, select either the CD or USB stick and press Enter.
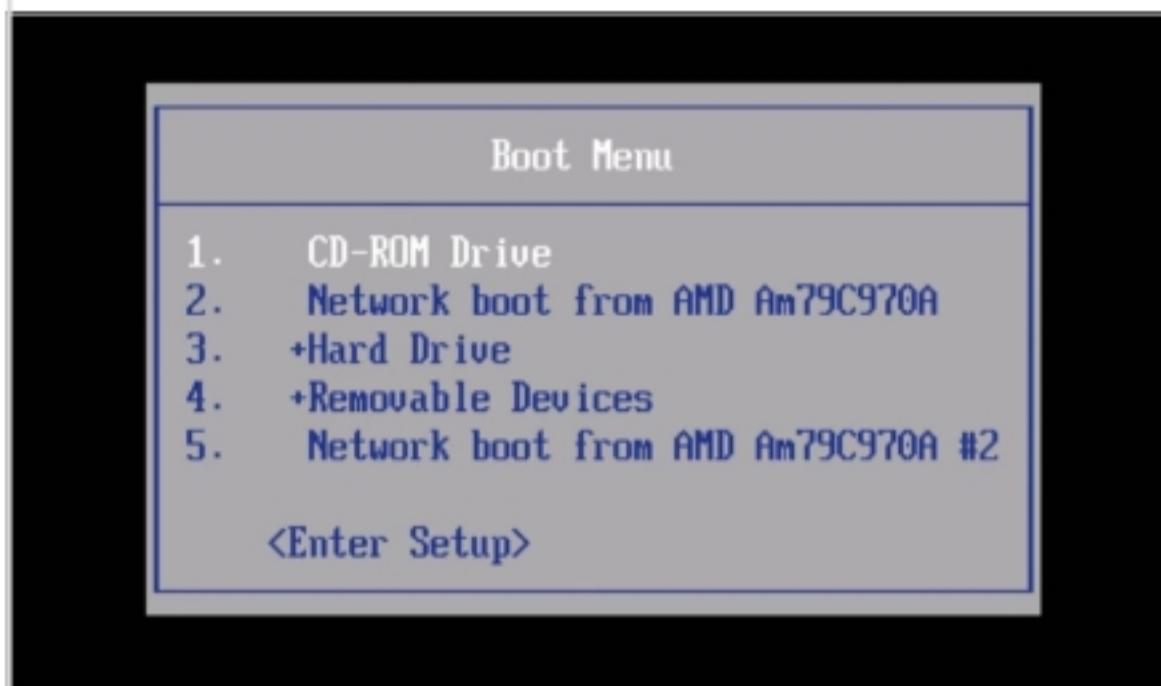
Step 6 The PC will now boot into the Bitdefender Rescue Disc environment. This is a custom Linux operating system with all the necessary Bitdefender security tools preinstalled. First, you need to choose which language to load the environment. Use the arrow keys and press Enter for your language choice.

Step 7 Ideally you should use a wired Internet connection but if you're on wireless, click on the network icon in the bottom right of the desktop to establish a connection with your router. Once you're connected to the Internet, double-click the red Bitdefender icon on the desktop, labelled Antivirus Scanner.

Step 8 You need to accept the license agreement notification first, so tick the 'I agree' box, followed by the Continue button. The virus scanning software will then start to automatically update itself with the latest virus definitions from the Bitdefender servers. The process won't take too long, so let it run through the update.
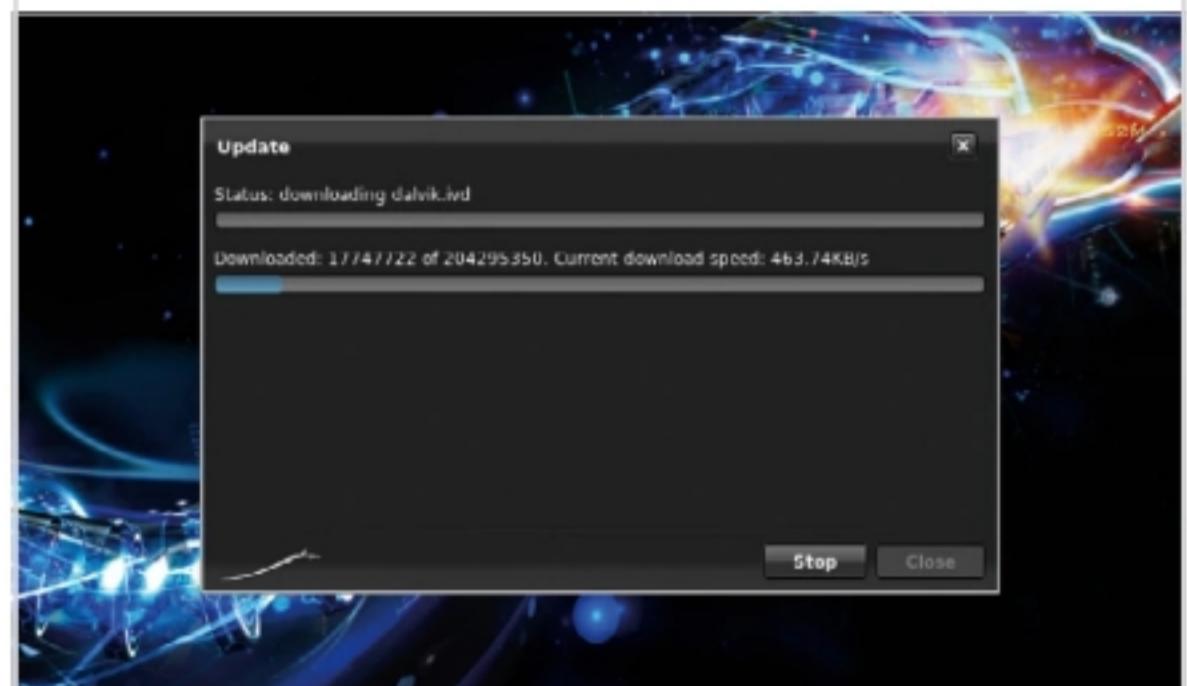
Step 9 Once the update is complete you're taken to the main Bitdefender Rescue CD antivirus interface. The three main options: Scan Now, Update Now and Settings are fairly self-explanatory; the Settings allows you to set a few more options regarding the scan but the defaults will suffice.
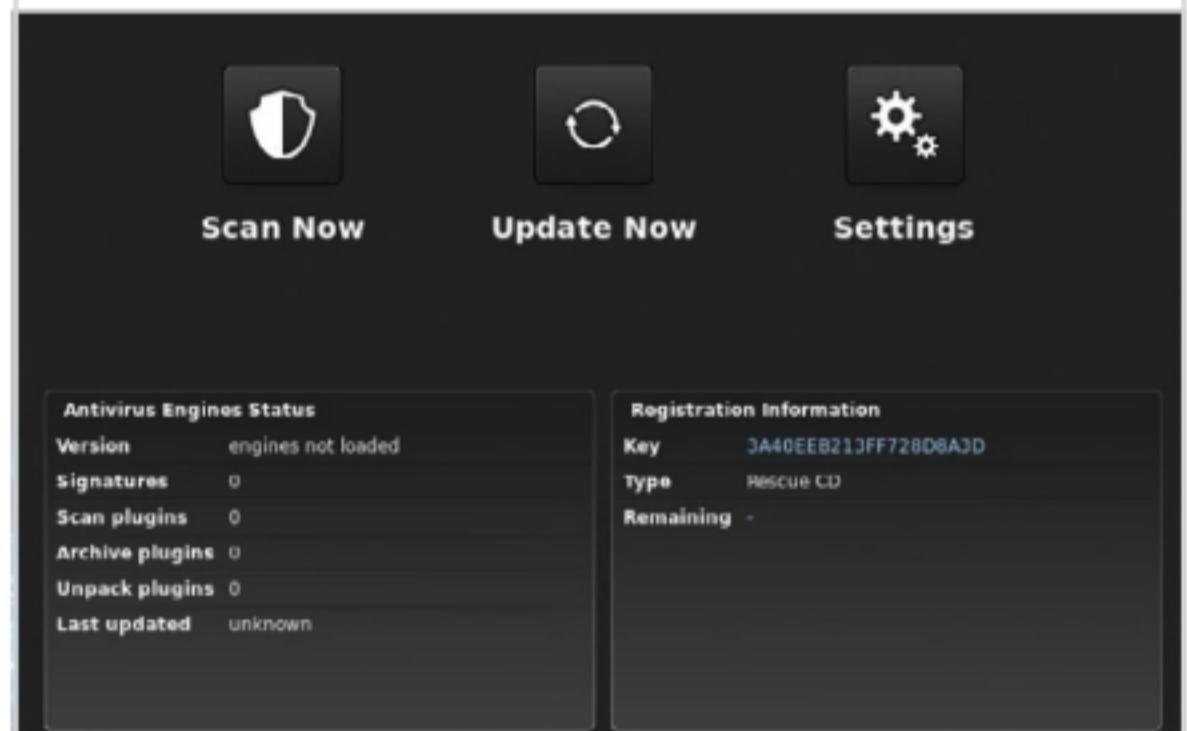
Step 10 To remove a virus on your PC, click on the Scan Now button. Select the drive you wish to scan and click the Open button to commence scanning the system. Any viruses found will be detailed along with options for removal. The process may take some time, so be prepared for a lengthy wait.
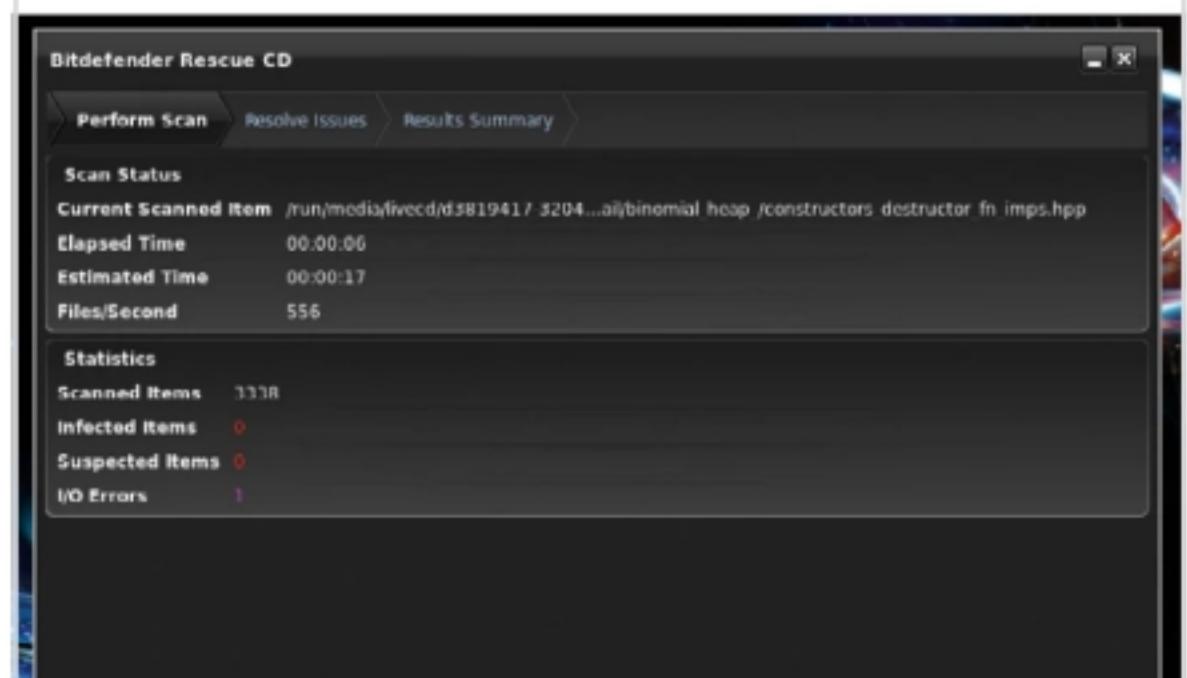
How to Remove Malware from Windows 10

Previously we have looked at ways to prevent being scammed or indeed getting malware on your system but what if you're unlucky enough to already have some form of digital infection? Thankfully there's a way to remove malware and viruses from your computer.

Malware Busters

For this tutorial let's use a preconfigured rescue disk from Bitdefender. You need to transfer or burn the disk contents to a CD or a USB stick and boot into the safe environment through one of those mediums.

Step 1 Make sure you have a blank CD or a USB stick that's at least 1GB in size. The Bitdefender Rescue Disk is downloaded as an ISO, which is an image file containing all the disk information, and can be downloaded from www.download.bitdefender.com/rescue_cd/latest/bitdefender-rescue-cd.iso.

Step 2 To transfer the ISO to USB, download Stickifier, which is an executable that doesn't require any installation. Insert your USB stick and double-click Stickifier. Click the Select an Existing ISO Image option followed by the three full-stops and using Windows Explorer, locate the downloaded Bitdefender Rescue ISO. Click the Open button to select the image and continue with the process.

Step 3 Click the Next button and using the drop-down menu next to Removable Drive choose the drive letter of your USB stick. Click Next to start the transfer of the image. Once the image is transferred, click the Finish button, remove the USB stick and power off your computer.

Step 4 If you're using a CD, start by inserting the CD into the drive. Locate the downloaded Bitdefender Rescue ISO, right-click it and choose Burn Disc Image from the context menu. Tick the Verify disc after burning option and click the Burn button to start the process. Once the ISO is burnt to the disc, you can power off your computer.

Troubleshooters

Windows 10 includes a number of troubleshooting tools, aimed specifically at certain problems such as audio loss or patchy Internet connection. This is often the best place to start when trying to solve problems with your PC and Windows 10, as the OS contains many drivers for common devices and may just need a small software update.
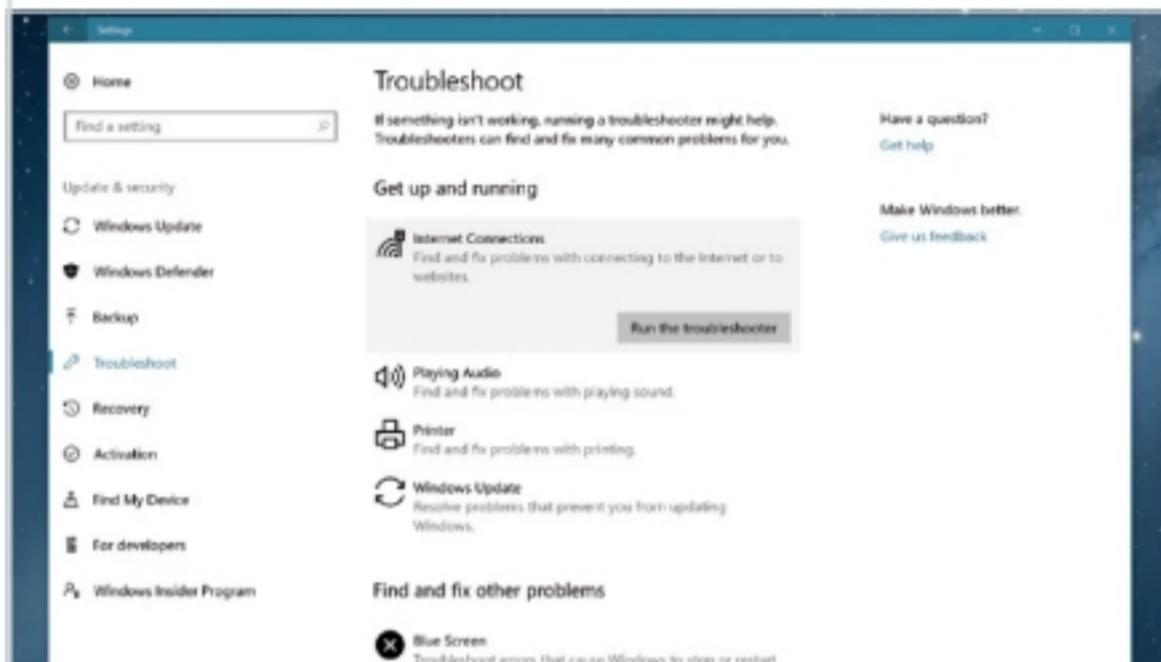
You simply look through the list of troubleshooters and click on the one which applies. Choose Run the Troubleshooter and then follow the instructions to try and solve the problem. You can find the troubleshooters in Settings > Update & Security > Troubleshoot.

Disk Management
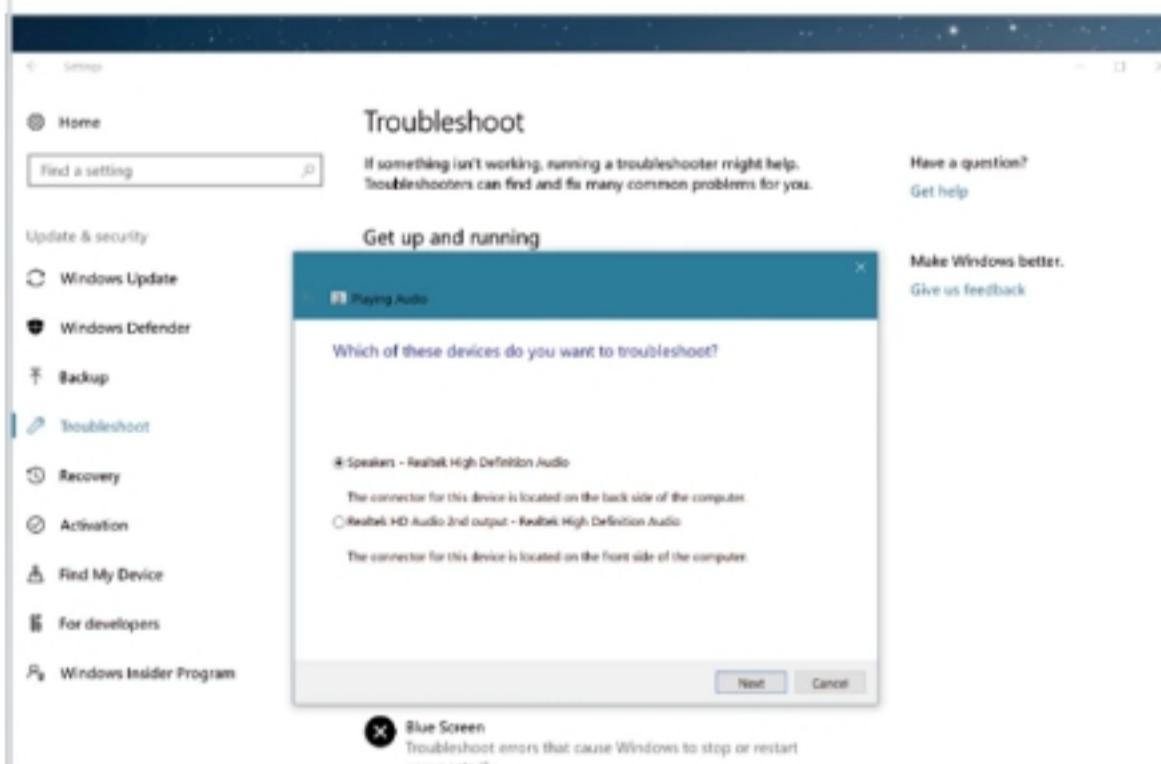
The Disk Management tool is more about diagnostics than actual maintenance but it is a useful way of checking whether your hard disk has space available and is healthy. The panel will show all of your disks, as well as all of the partitions.
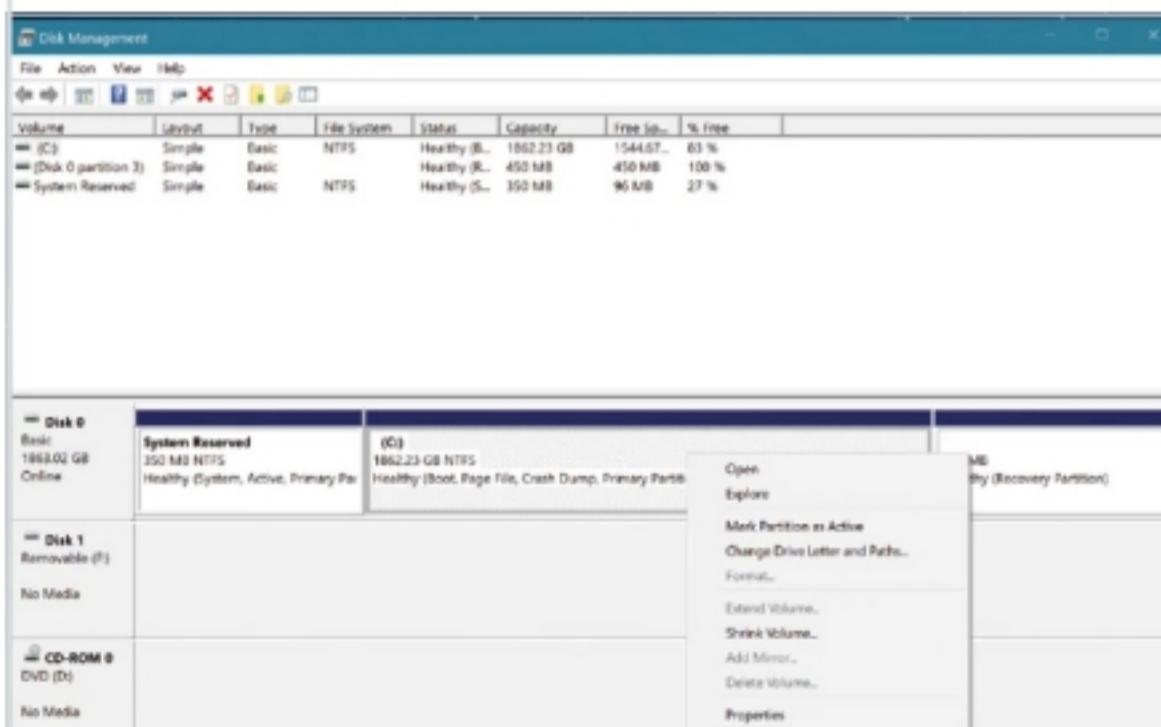
Disk Tools

There are several tools built in to Windows 10 (and also in older versions of the OS) that allow you to clean, fix and manage your hard disk. Open the File Explorer and look in the left-hand column for 'This PC'. Select it and then right-click on Local Disk (C:). In the General tab, you will see a button for Disk Clean-up that lets you get rid of temporary Internet files, old program files and so on.
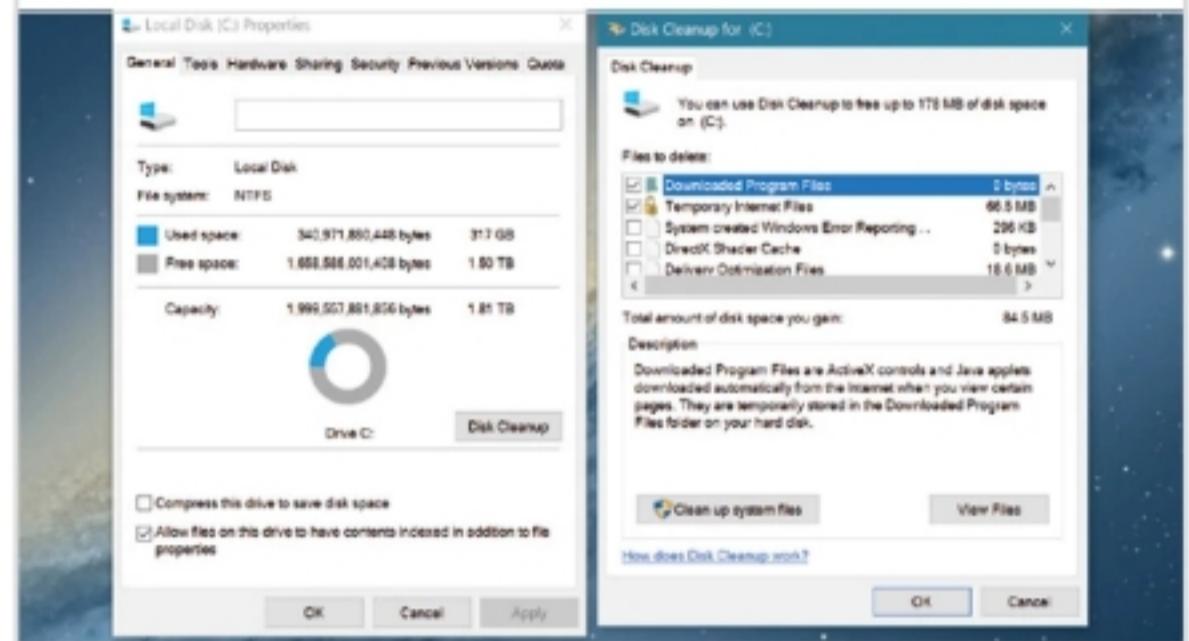
If you click the Tools tab, you can use the Error Checking tool and the Disk Defragment tool. Both of these tools can help your hard disk run more efficiently. Click on either button and follow the instructions for each.
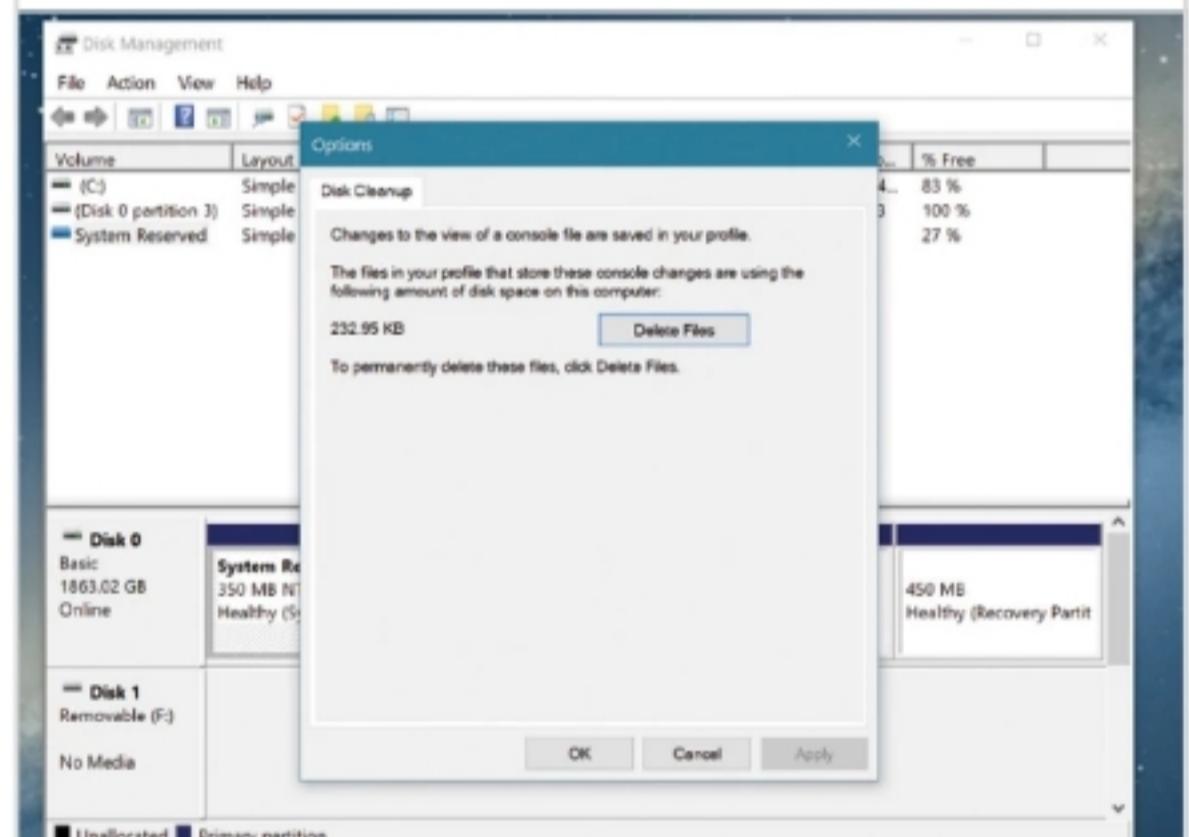
Each column contains information about capacity, free space in MB, percentage of free space and health status. There are some further options, such as the ability to change drive letters and mark partitions as active but they are probably not worth playing around with unless you know what you are doing.
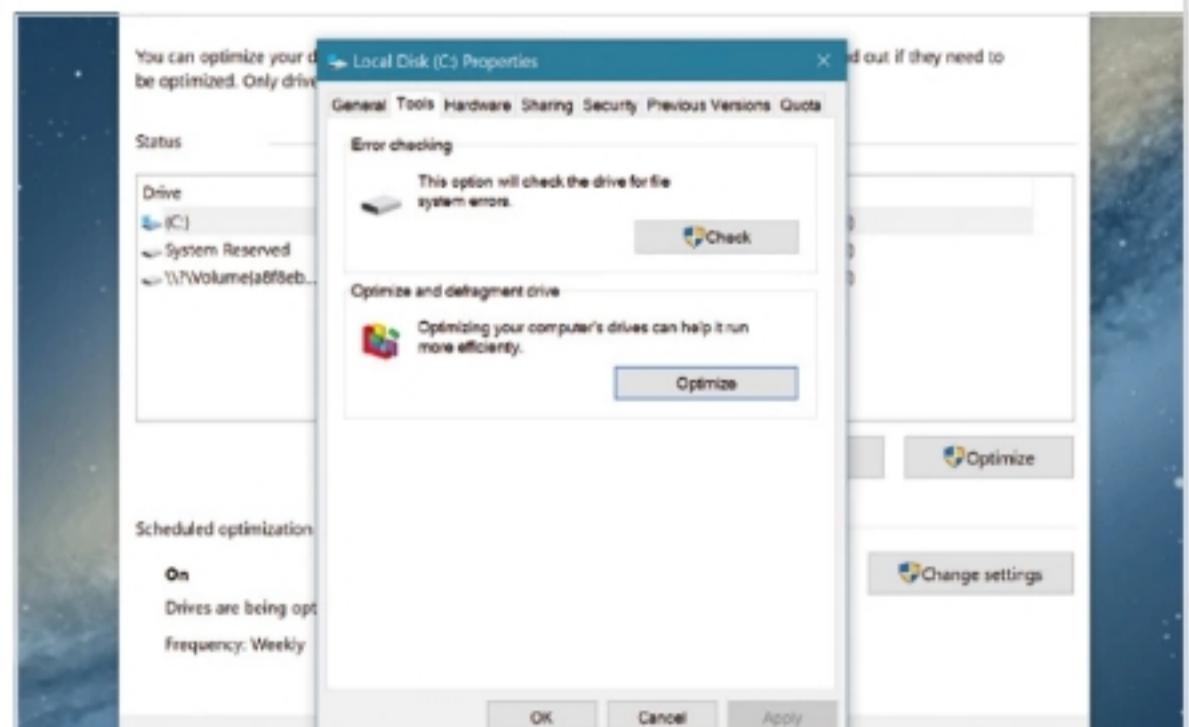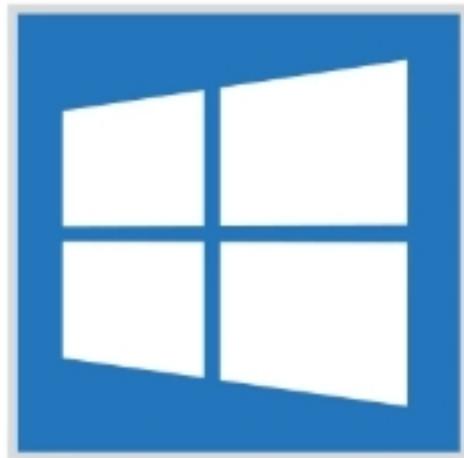
Windows 10 Maintenance Tools

Before you start to add software to help with maintenance, it is worth checking out the numerous tools included with the OS. These are spread out over several menus but once you find them you will see that they can really help with security and performance.

Maintaining Windows 10

Windows 10 is a lot better at keeping you informed of problems than previous versions were. It is, however, up to you to keep on top of maintaining the OS if you want the best experience.

Storage Sense Activating Storage Sense lets the system software automatically free up storage space by getting rid of files you no longer need. These can include temporary files such as cookies and the contents of your Recycle Bin.

You can choose when files are deleted, e.g. after 30 days in the Recycle Bin or if apps don't use them for a certain amount of time. Alternatively you can simply click a button to Clean Now rather than setting automatic cleaning. You can find the Storage Sense option in Settings > System > Storage.

Background Apps One of the easiest ways to conserve power (for laptop users) and reduce processor strain, is to take control of Background Apps. These are apps that are, by default, allowed to receive info, send notifications and update in the background.

You can either stop all background apps with a single slider click or you can prevent individual apps from running in the background. Go to Settings > Privacy > Background Apps and look through the apps listed. If you see apps that you don't need notifications or updates from, click the slider to disable its background activity.

Step 5 Another useful privacy section in the dashboard is the Advertising Preferences. This lets you control whether personalised adverts are shown to you in the Edge browser. Some of the ads you may receive on Microsoft websites and apps are tailored to your previous activities and searches.

Step 6 There is also a browser tool that lets you choose if the adverts you see come from companies other than Microsoft. Click the option under More Choices and wait for the Digital Advertising Alliance scan to finish. You can then choose from the list to see adverts from different advert providers.

Privacy Settings

There are, of course, still privacy options in the main Settings app in Windows 10. This is generally added to and improved with each OS update.

General Privacy Privacy has its own section within the settings; here there are many different categories covering everything from Location to Background Apps. Click on each of the privacy categories to see the options within that category. Use the slider switches to allow or block privacy actions.

Account Info Apps are able to access very basic personal settings such as your name and account information. This is so they can sign you in automatically to your Windows account for things like Xbox Live or the Windows Store. You can turn this off wholesale or on an app by app basis.

Messaging Apps We're using Windows 10 on a laptop here but if we had a tablet with a SIM card we would be able to get control over which apps were able to send messages over SMS and MMS. You probably want this to be restricted to just your Messaging app; most apps really shouldn't have access to your texts.

Background Apps You can control which apps you allow to run in the background. If you're on a laptop or desktop this probably won't be that big an issue, but you may want to turn these off on tablet devices to conserve power. Some apps you may not use, like Get Office, really don't need to run in the background.

Manage Your Privacy in Windows 10

Being in control of security on your computer is important but almost as important is being able to control your privacy settings. Microsoft recently launched a web-based privacy dashboard tool and this has now become available to everyone in the Creators update.

The Privacy Dashboard

The privacy dashboard is web-based rather than in the settings and it allows you to manage multiple devices from a single interface, as long as you are logged in to a single account.

Step 1 Open your browser and navigate to www. account.microsoft.com/privacy. If prompted, use your Microsoft account details to log in. You will be logged in to the privacy overview page that lets you quickly see what privacy settings the dashboard contains and controls.

Step 2 Along with the main Search, Browsing and Location privacy categories, if you scroll down to the bottom of the page you will see entries for everything from Apps to Xbox, with simple links to take you to the settings and options for those privacy areas.

Step 3 Click on one of the main categories, Search, Browsing, Location or Cortana, and you will see more information. This could include a list of searches you have made or websites visited (in Edge only, not other browsers), interests Cortana has saved for you or locations you have been.

Step 4 Each section has a Clear button, whether that is clearing browsing history, search history and so on. It is next to a warning that states clearing data will stop Windows being able to provide you with accurate and relevant information. You need to decide what is more important, privacy or recommendations.

Step 5 You should be fairly careful when changing these advanced settings, especially for things like the processor (although Windows should prevent you from making a damaging change). It is best to make small changes, and then test to see if the change has had the desired effect, before making more.
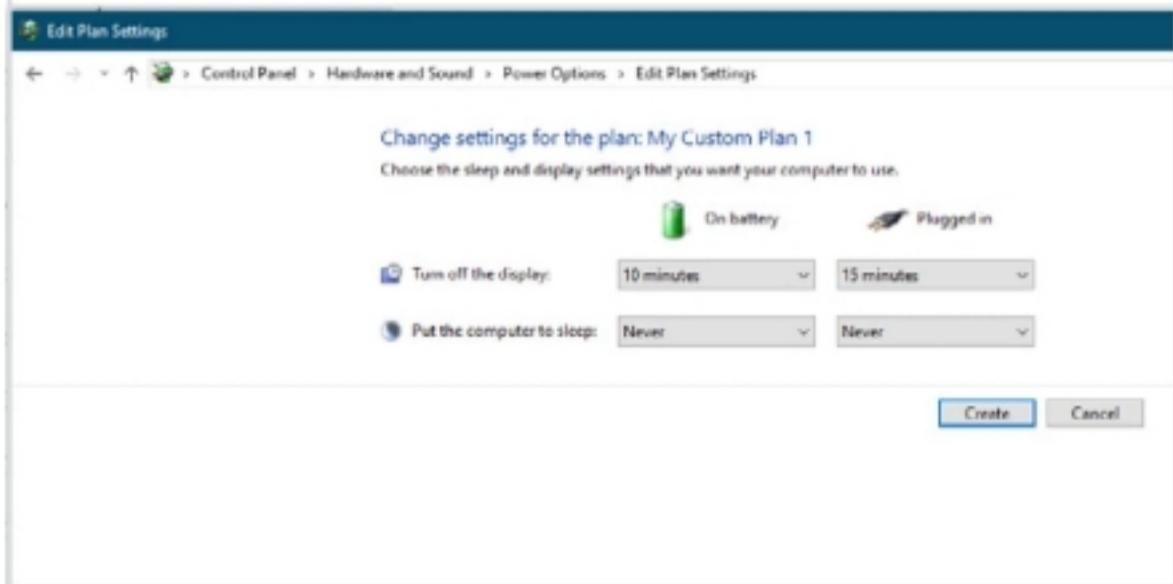
Step 6 Your laptop might have software installed that automatically switches power plans, depending on whether it is working on battery power or plugged into the mains. The settings for this can usually be found in the taskbar tools panel at the bottom right of the screen.
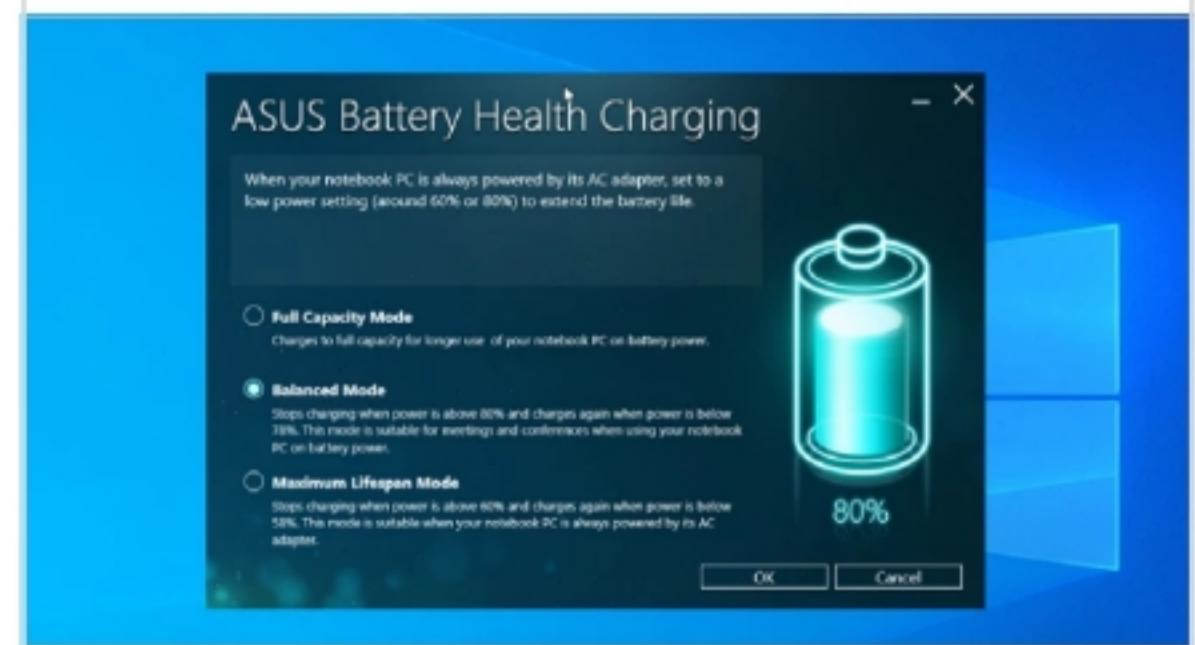
Use Your Laptop with the Lid Closed

If you want to be able to use your laptop with an external keyboard, mouse and monitor, without having to keep it on your desk and switched on, you need to change some power settings.

Step 1 When you close your laptop lid, the default setting will be for Windows 10 to go into low power sleep mode. This is obviously no good if you are using your laptop with an external monitor, as it will make the laptop unusable. To solve this problem, click on the Battery icon > power settings in the taskbar.

Step 2 In the Power Options panel, look in the left sidebar for the option to "Choose what closing the lid does". Click this and you will see the Power button, Sleep button, and lid closing settings. You can change the settings for each individually. Settings include: Do Nothing, Sleep, Hibernate and Shut Down.

Step 3 Use the drop-down menus to select what happens when you close the lid, both when on battery and when the laptop is plugged into the mains. When you are happy with your settings, click the Save the changes button and you will be able to use the laptop as a desktop replacement with the lid closed.
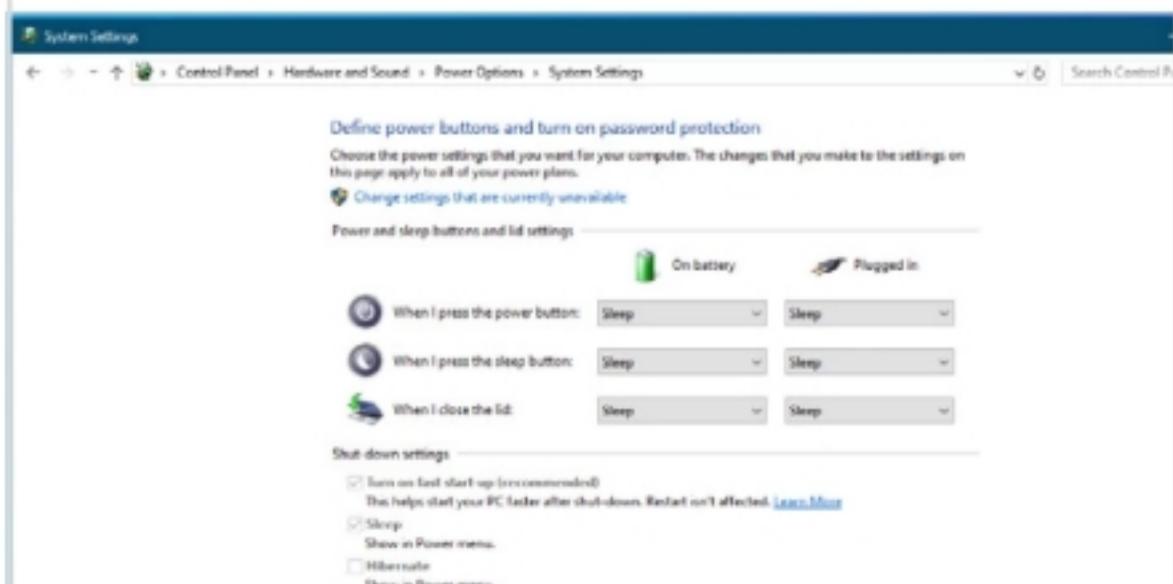
Step 4 If you also take your laptop to different locations out of the house, it is a good idea to revert these changes. If you don't, you run the risk of having the laptop continue to run while in a bag, etc., which, if the cooling vents are covered, can be damaging to the hardware.
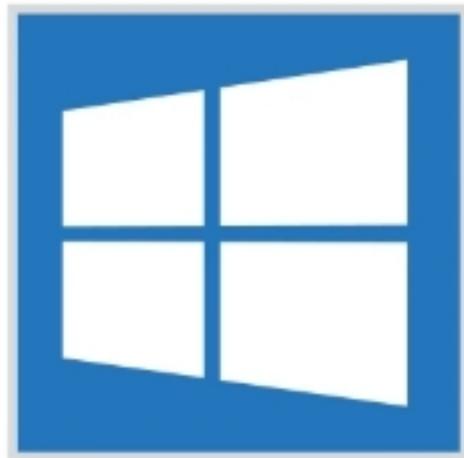
Windows 10 Power Options

If you use Windows 10 on a desktop PC, you might adjust the power options for how long the PC sleeps or when the display turns off when inactive. With a laptop, the Windows 10 power options should definitely be something with which you are more familiar with.

View, Switch, and Create Power Plans

Within the Power Options panel you can choose from preset Windows 10 power plans, or you can create your own based on your computers' power requirements.

Step 1 Open the main Windows 10 settings app, then click System > Power & Sleep > Additional Power Settings. Windows 10 will, by default, have selected the Balanced power plan. This is designed to balance performance and energy consumption, and is best for PC's that are connected to the mains.

Step 2 On a laptop, you can access the power options by right-clicking on battery indicator in the taskbar tools. There are two other, default power plans alongside Balanced; Power Saver is designed to reduce energy use by scaling back performance when possible. Good for laptops using battery power.

Step 3 The High Performance power plan is, as the name suggests, best for overall performance, but will use more power and is unsuitable for use on a laptop using battery power. To switch between power plans, simply select the one you want to use. For many users, this is all you will need to do.
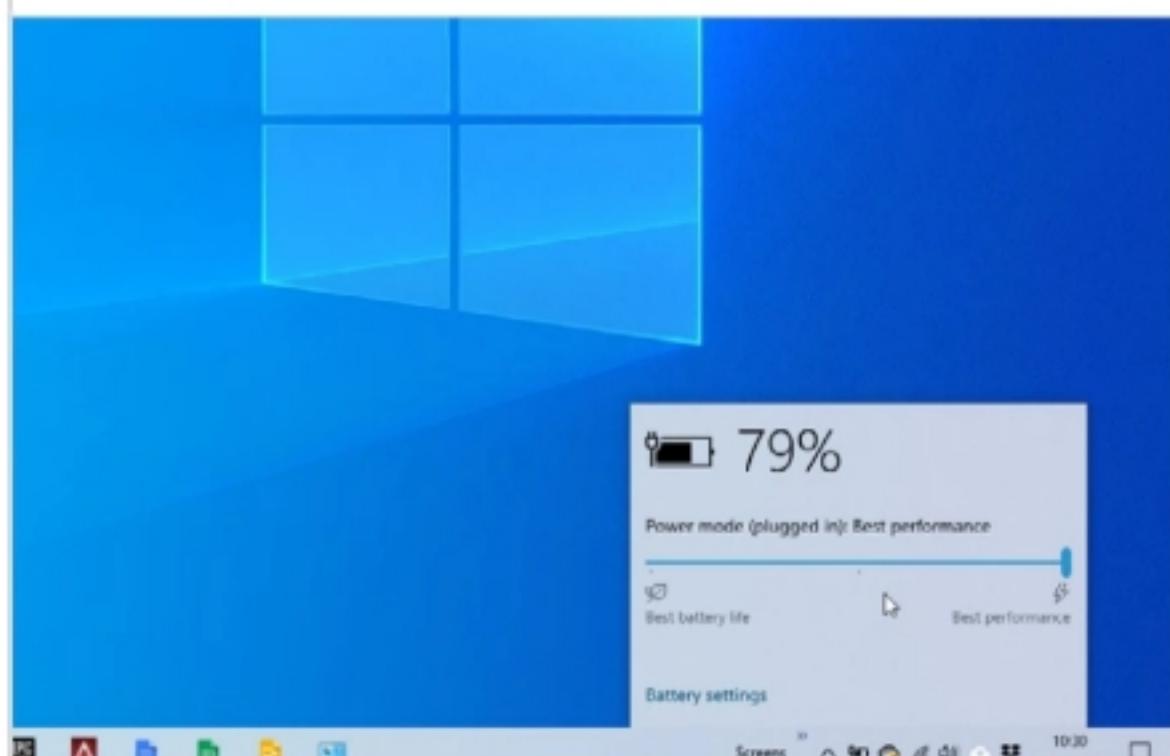
Step 4 To customise any of the power plans, click the link next to the relevant one. The next screen will let you set when the display turns off and when the computer sleeps after inactivity. You can also click "Change Advanced Power Settings" to see settings for the hard disk, desktop, USB and processor and more.
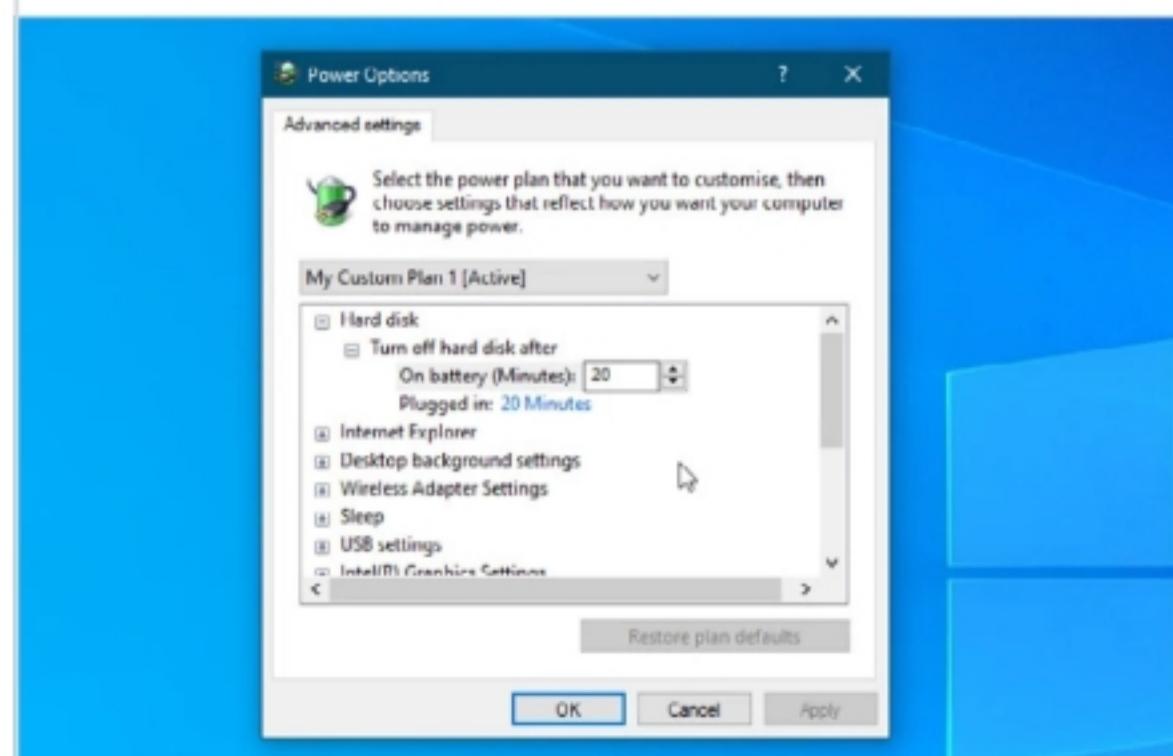
together with a key. This creates a garbled file of characters that can only be read if the correct key is applied to decrypt the data. Algorithms today are divided into two categories: symmetric and asymmetric.

Symmetric key cyphers use the same key to both encrypt and decrypt data. The most popular symmetric cypher is AES (Advanced Encryption Standard), developed by the military and government to protect communications and data. This is a quick form of decryption that requires the sender to exchange the key used to encrypt the data with the recipient before they're able to read it.

Asymmetric key cyphers are also known as public-key cryptography and utilise two mathematically linked keys, public and private. The

Forms of encryption can be traced as far back as ancient Egypt, using non-standard hieroglyphs

Making data impossible to read is just one step; you also need the key to decrypt that data

public key can be shared with everyone and is usually generated by software or provided by a designated authority. The private key is something that's usually only known by the individual user. Interestingly both types of keys can be applied, where one user has a public key and another a private key, which can be combined to form a shared encryption level.

These keys are many characters in length, making it nigh impossible for someone to Brute Force hack them. The Brute Force method involves using a program on a computer to try every possible combination of a key until the correct one is found. In the case of the 256-bit encryption, it would take 2^{256} different combinations to break the key. If you were able to force one trillion keys per second, it would still take you somewhere in the region of 10^{57} years in order to crack 256-bit encryption. However, a powerful computer can probably manage around two billion calculations per second, so in theory, it would take 9.2^{50} years for your standard desktop to crack it. Keep in mind that the universe has theoretically only been in existence for 1.4^{10} years.

Numbers this big are generally far too mind-boggling to comprehend. Suffice to say that if you're able to use 256-bit encryption for your communications or to protect your data, then you're going to be protected for at least seven times the current age of the universe.

The universe is 14 billion years old, but it would take seven times that time to crack 256-bit encryption
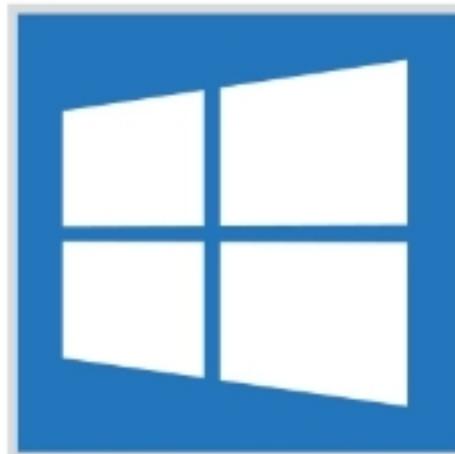
What is Encryption?

To better understand encryption, it's worth taking a moment to learn about its origins, how it has developed over the years and how it applies to our modern communications.

Encryption is the act of protecting your data from prying eyes

The word encryption comes from the ancient Greek word Kryptos, which means hidden or secret. Interestingly, the practise of hiding messages from others can be traced back to early Egyptian scribes who inserted non-standard hieroglyphs within other communications in order to hide the message from casual viewers. According to historians, the Spartans used strips of leather engraved with messages. When the strips were read, they were meaningless, but when wrapped around a staff of a certain diameter, the characters would be decipherable.

Of course, the modern forms of encryption are far more advanced, but the overall core concept has remained the same: to be able to send a message to others without anyone else being able to decipher it. However, modern encryption now requires more than merely sending coded messages. Not only is confidentiality required, encryption must perform a level of authentication, so the origin of the communication can be verified; integrity of the communications, where both the sender and those who receive the communication can be sure that the message hasn't been altered in between; and some form of nonrepudiation, where the sender cannot deny having sent the communication in the first place.

During the early digital age, the only users of encryption were the government and military. As such, between them they created a set of algorithms and standards to protect the communication on the battlefield and from one government agency to the next. These algorithms grew in complexity as technology advanced and it wasn't long before the military-based forms of encryption were being used in commercial modes of communications. Within a few short years, bank transfers, cash withdrawals and data sent to and from modems began utilising these new protocols to protect sensitive information.

Today we're regularly seeing and using devices that boast 'military-grade 256-bit AES' forms of encryption, a standard that is regarded as nearly impossible to break without spending billions on specialist hardware and software. In plain English, the modern form of encryption takes data and passes it through an algorithm

Step 5 The dcrypt_setup.exe file should now be in your Downloads folder. Double-click it and select Yes to accept the Windows confirmation. With the DiskCryptor setup window open, click the Next button and accept the license agreement on the following page. For the remainder of the options, choose the defaults by clicking Next. When done, click the Install button and reboot the computer.

Step 8 You're now offered a selection of available algorithms from which to choose. Click the drop-down box to view them all, however, we recommend staying with the default AES algorithm for the time being. Leave the Wipe Mode box as None and when you're ready, click the Next button.

Step 6 After a reboot, click the Windows Start button and locate the newly installed DiskCryptor program. You need to click Yes to authorise its administrative access. With DiskCryptor open you can see the list of currently installed hard drives in your system. You can click each in turn and view its information at the bottom of the DiskCryptor window.
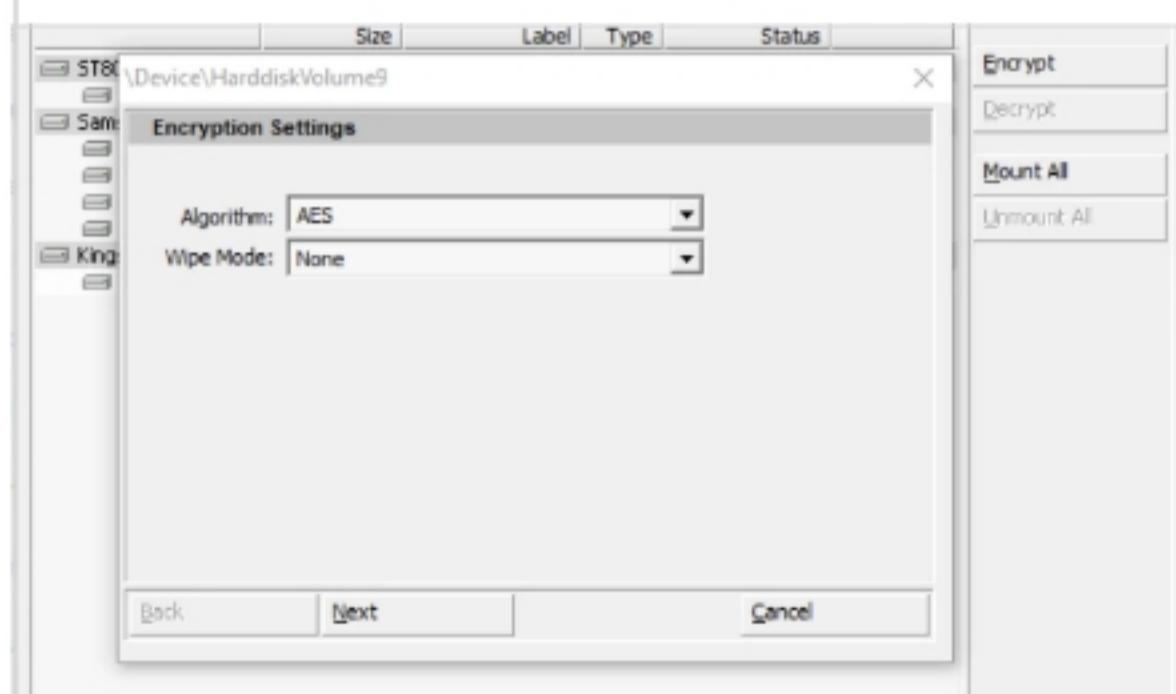
Step 9 In the next section, choose a unique password for accessing the encrypted disk; you're notified how strong the password is. When you're ready, enter it again in the Confirm box. Click the OK box to start the encryption process.

Step 7 Start by selecting the disk you want to encrypt. As mentioned before, in our example we're going to test this out on a USB stick. We recommend you also do this until you're comfortable with the process. With the correct drive selected, either click the Encrypt button to the right or right-click and choose Encrypt from the menu.
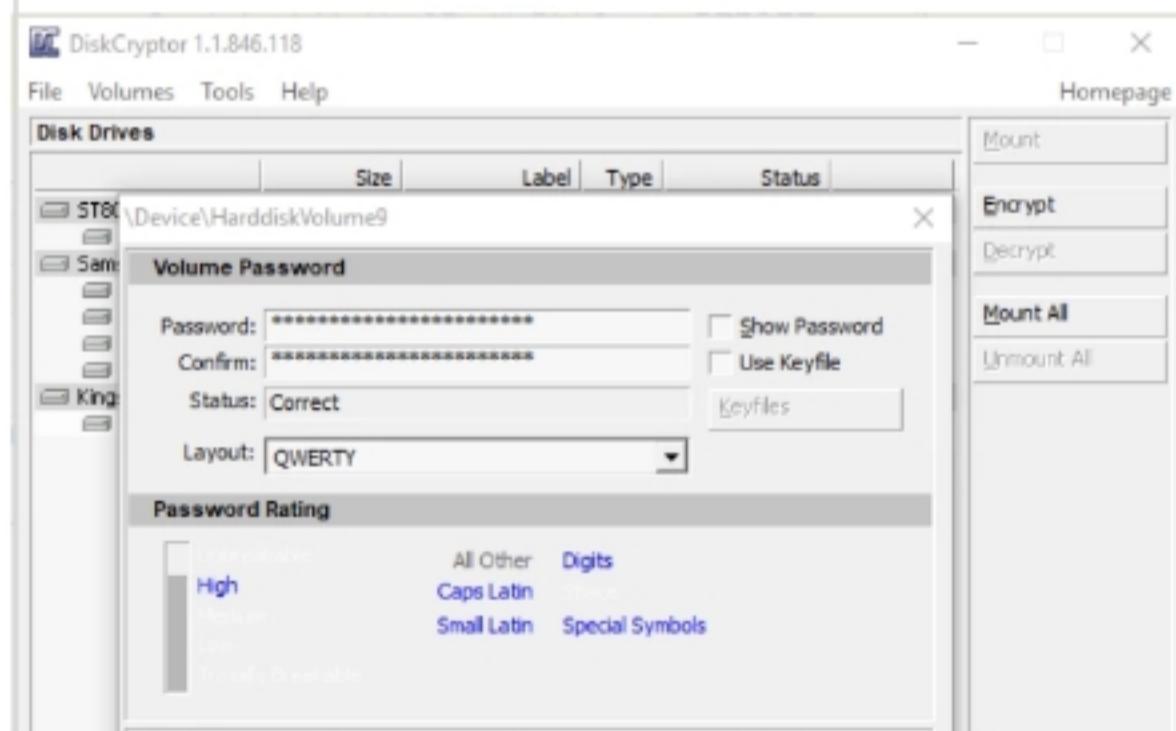
Step 10 Depending on the size of the drive, and how much data is on it, the encryption process could take some time. When it's complete, you're notified and the selected drive will be fully encrypted, with you able to access and decrypt it using the password you set up in the previous step.
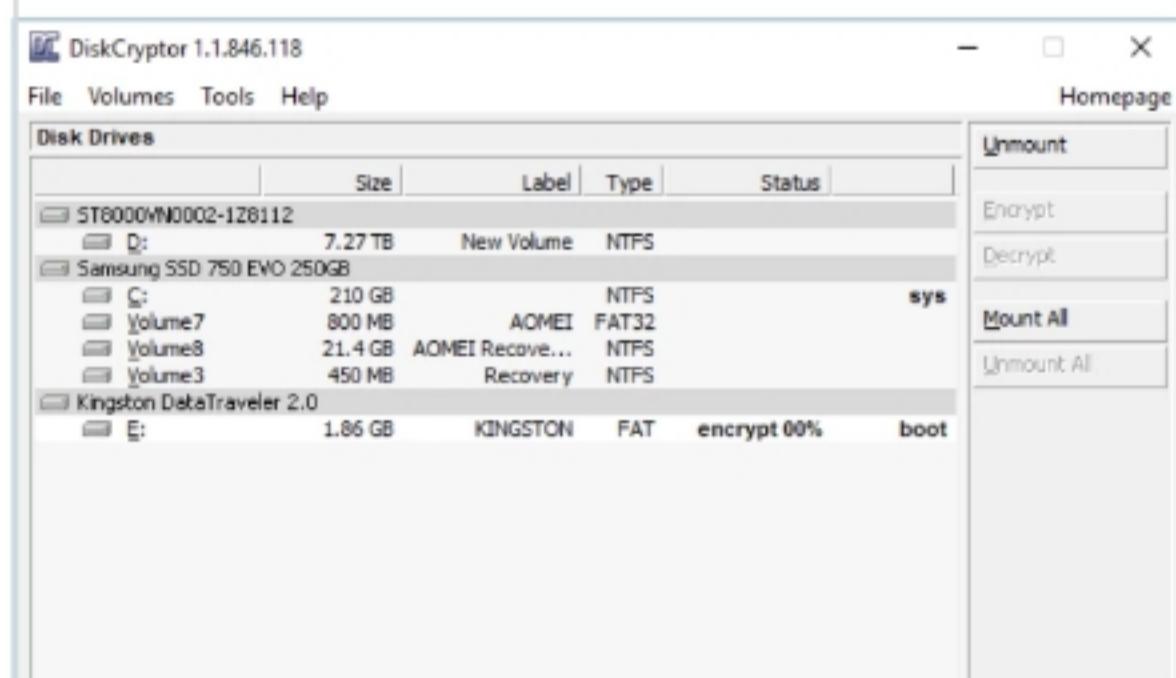
Encrypting Your Windows 10 Laptop

Windows 10 Pro comes with Microsoft's BitLocker program to encrypt the file system; however, Windows 10 Home versions do not have this feature. Thankfully, there are many encryption programs available for download; we're using DiskCryptor in this tutorial.

Windows 10, Under Lock and Key

We're going to encrypt a 2GB USB flash in this example, purely for ease of use and to demonstrate how you can encrypt your entire laptop hard drive(s).

Step 1
Encryption doesn't affect the core data, other than making it impossible to read without the decryption key. Still, it's always worth making sure you have a backup of all your data prior to any system related changes. If you store your work or data in the Documents folder, then start by opening it in Windows Explorer.
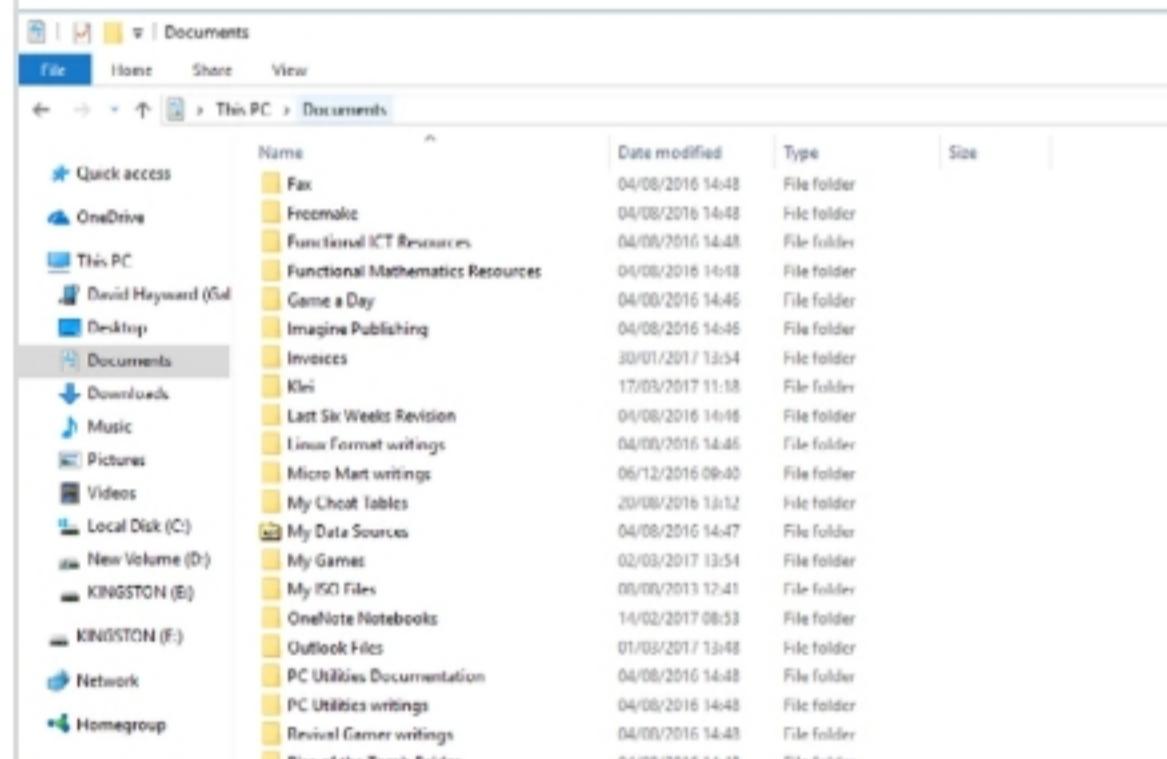
Step 2
Press Ctrl+A to highlight all the files, then press Ctrl+C to copy them to the clipboard. Next, choose a suitable backup location – such as an external or network drive – and when ready, press Ctrl+V to paste the copied data into the new location. Then, should something go wrong, you have a recent backup of your most used data.
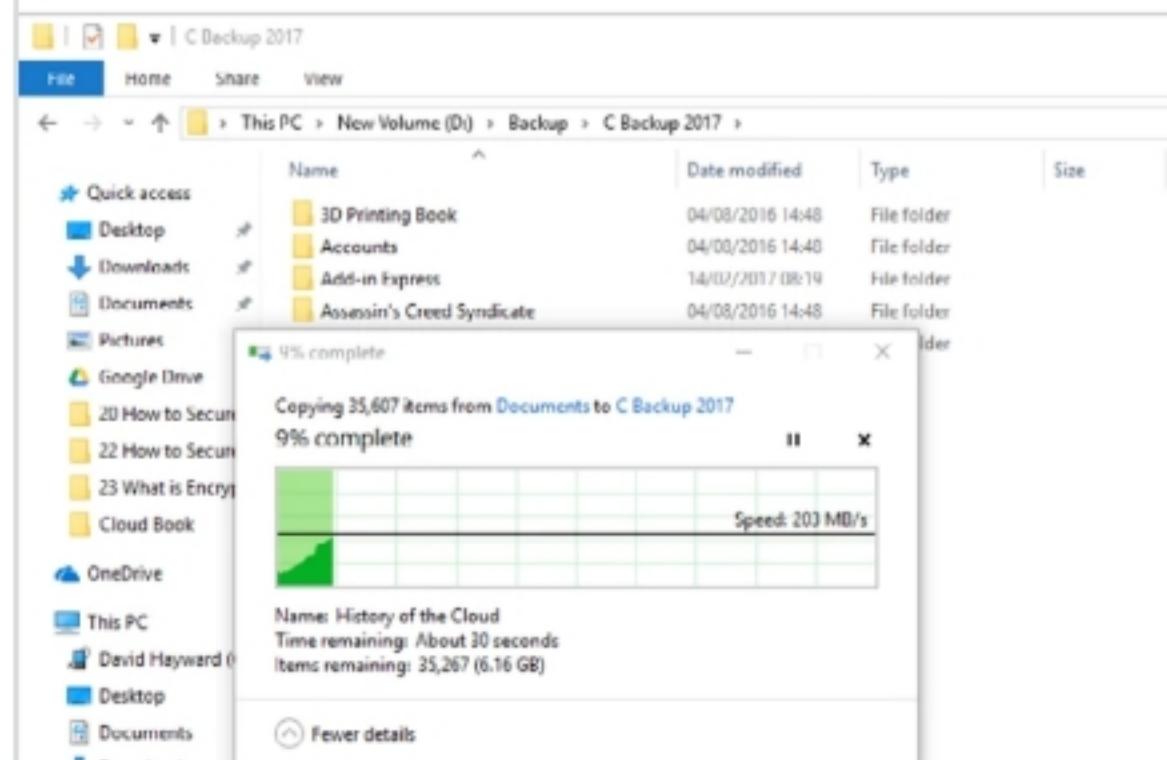
Step 3
It's always best to save data before commencing with anything like this. It's also always worth doing (as we are) a test of the software first, on a disk that you don't mind messing up should you get the process wrong. Let's start by navigating to the DiskCryptor homepage, at **www. diskcryptor.net/wiki/Main_Page.**
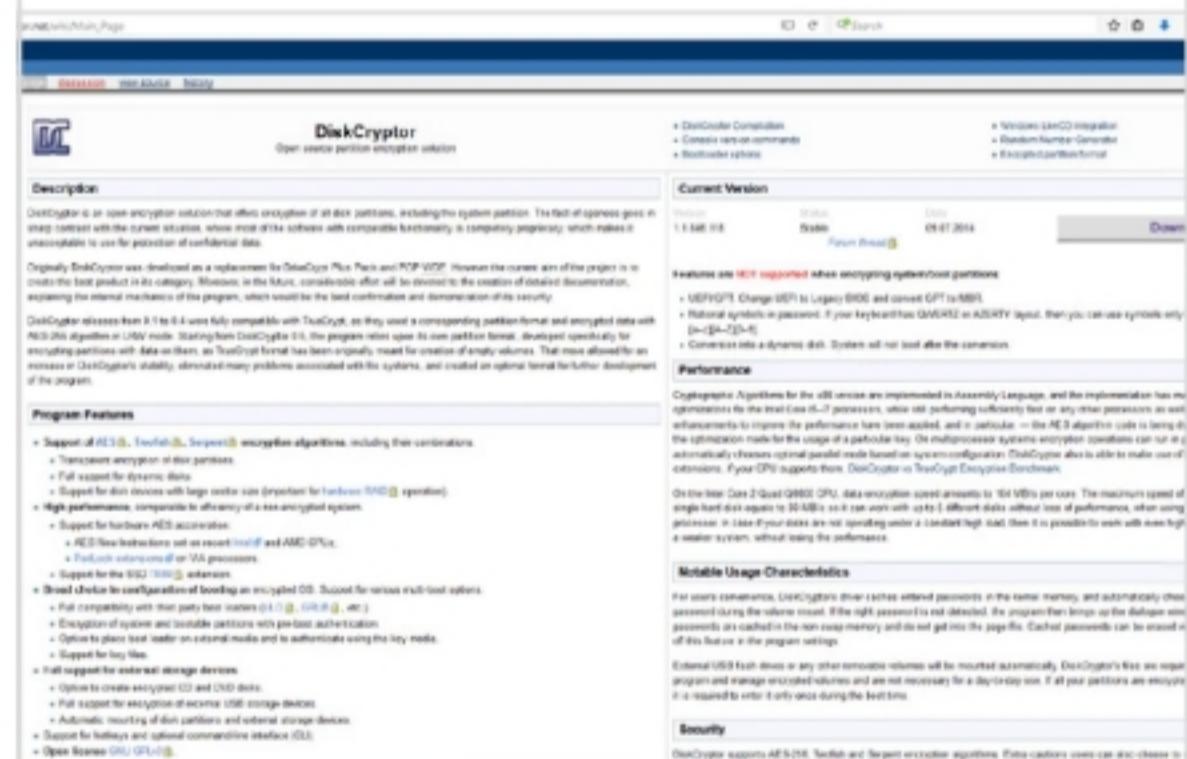
Step 4
Using the menu to the top left, click on the Downloads link. Look for the latest version in the Download section and click the link for the Installer. This opens a confirmation box; click the Save File button to download the DiskCryptor executable file.
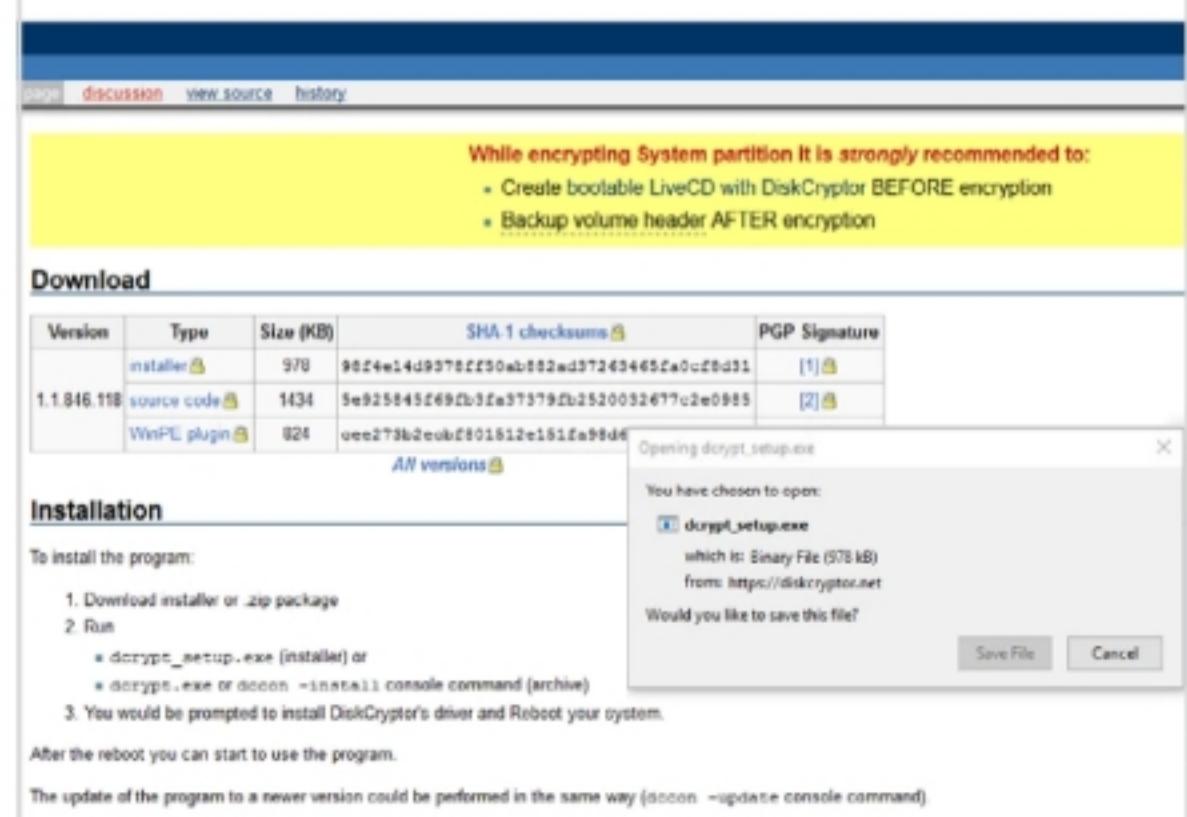
3 CREATE A WIRELESS NETWORK REPORT

With the simplest attempts at a fix out of the way, it is time to dig a little deeper by generating a Wireless Network Report. This takes a bit of work with the Command Prompt, but is actually nothing to be scared of and quite simple if you follow these steps. Generating the report creates a HTML file that you can open in your web browser (even with no Internet connection).

The report will contain a lot of information that will most likely be hard to decipher, but the main thing you need to look out for are the Connection Successes/Failures, where information about network connection attempts will be shown.

```
Select Administrator: Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17763.194]
(c) 2018 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\WINDOWS\system32>netsh wlan show wlanreport
Generating report ...
Querying WLAN Events ...
Running ipconfig ...
Running netsh wlan show all ...
Querying Wireless Profiles ...
The Wireless AutoConfig Service (wlansvc) is not running.Querying System and User Certificates ...
Querying User Info ...
Querying Network Devices ...

Report written to: C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\WlanReport\wlan-report-latest.html
done.


C:\WINDOWS\system32>
```

Step 1
Click in the Search box on the taskbar and type "Command Prompt", right-click on the Command Prompt listing in the search results and then select "Run as administrator" from the action menu.

Step 2
In the Command Prompt window, type `netsh wlan show wlanreport`.

Step 3
At the bottom of the Command Prompt it shows where you can find the generated report on your PC (e.g. C:\programdata\Microsoft\Windows\WlanReport.html).

4 PERFORM A PING TRACE

To check if the problem is with your ISP or router, rather than your PC or software, you can perform a ping test. This tests to see if data can be sent and received over the network. If the ping test is successful, but you cannot connect to the Internet on your PC, it means there is more likely a problem at the ISP end and you will need to contact them for help.

Step 1
In the Search box on the taskbar, type "Command Prompt", select it in the results and then select "Run as administrator".

Step 2
At the Command Prompt, type ipconfig and look for the IP address listed next to Default Gateway (something like 192.168.1.2).

Step 3
Now type: "ping <Default Gateway IP>" and press Enter. It should look something like "ping 192.168.1.2".

A successful result should be something like this:

Reply from 192.168.1.1: bytes=32 time=5ms TTL=64
Reply from 192.168.1.1: bytes=32 time=5ms TTL=64
Reply from 192.168.1.1: bytes=32 time=5ms TTL=64
Reply from 192.168.1.1: bytes=32 time=5ms TTL=64

Ping statistics for 192.168.1.1: Packets: Sent = 4, Received = 4, Lost = 0 (0% loss), Approximate round trip times in milli-seconds: Minimum = 4ms, Maximum = 5ms, Average = 4ms

```
Administrator: Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17763.194]
(c) 2018 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\WINDOWS\system32>ipconfig

Windows IP Configuration


Ethernet adapter Ethernet:

   Connection-specific DNS Suffix  . : lan
   Link-local IPv6 Address . . . . . : fe80::48c5:a41c:2b70:fb5%3
   IPv4 Address. . . . . . . . . . . : 192.168.1.127
   Subnet Mask . . . . . . . . . . . : 255.255.255.0
   Default Gateway . . . . . . . . . : 192.168.1.1

C:\WINDOWS\system32>ping 192.168.1.1

Pinging 192.168.1.1 with 32 bytes of data:
Reply from 192.168.1.1: bytes=32 time<1ms TTL=64
Reply from 192.168.1.1: bytes=32 time<1ms TTL=64
Reply from 192.168.1.1: bytes=32 time<1ms TTL=64
Reply from 192.168.1.1: bytes=32 time<1ms TTL=64

Ping statistics for 192.168.1.1:
    Packets: Sent = 4, Received = 4, Lost = 0 (0% loss),
Approximate round trip times in milli-seconds:
    Minimum = 0ms, Maximum = 0ms, Average = 0ms

C:\WINDOWS\system32>
```
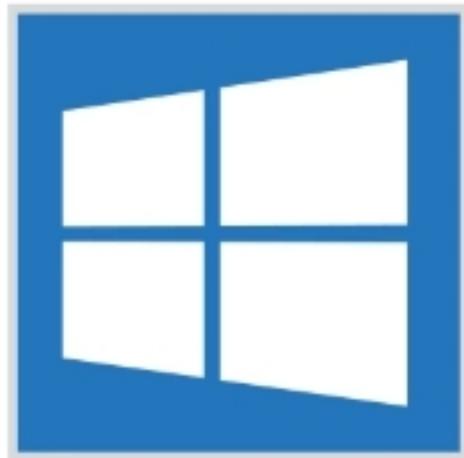
Fix Wireless Network Connection Problems

It's certainly frustrating when you've just sat down at your computer to browse YouTube videos or play some online games, only to find that you have no Internet connection. If the same problem occurs when you need to start work or finish that important essay, it can cause a ripple of panic to spread through your body. Try to stay calm by focusing on fixing it and initially try these solutions.

1 MAKE SURE WI-FI IS ON

If you are trying to connect wirelessly, check that Wi-Fi hasn't somehow been switched off: click the Start button, select Settings > Network & Internet > Wi-Fi. Next, select "Show available networks" and if your network appears in the list, select it, then select Connect.

If using a laptop, make sure the physical Wi-Fi switch (if there is one) is turned on. An indicator light usually shows when it's on or off.

Again, if using a laptop (or Windows 10 tablet), check to see that Airplane mode is turned off: select the Start button, then select Settings > Network & Internet > Airplane mode and if it's on, turn it off.
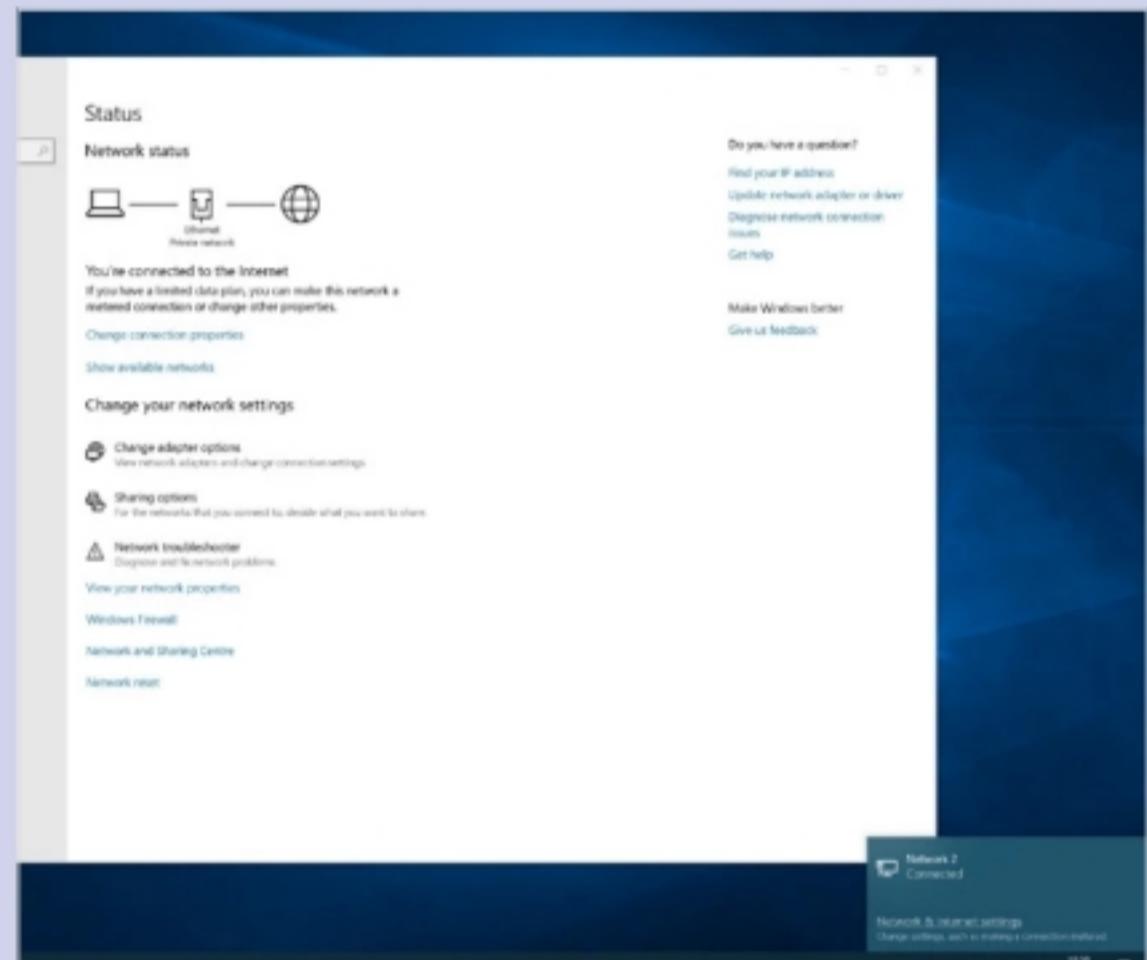
2 RESTART YOUR MODEM AND/OR WIRELESS ROUTER

If you've never experienced network problems before, you may never have touched your modem or wireless router, however, occasionally problems arise with its configuration and it needs to be reset to establish a new connection to your Internet service provider (ISP). When you do this, take into consideration that everyone connected to your Wi-Fi network will be temporarily disconnected.

Step 1
Unplug the power cable for the router and/or wireless modem from the power source.

Step 2
Some modems have a backup battery, if so, remove this and wait around 30 seconds.

Step 3
Replace the battery and plug the modem/router back into the power socket. The lights on the modem will blink for a few minutes as it reconnects.

Step 4
Wait until the status lights on the box stop blinking (if any fail to come on or light up red, there is another problem) and then try again to connect your PC to the network.

Step 5 You should now be ready to create your recovery drive. In the search field, type "Recovery Drive" and select the Create a Recovery Drive result. In newer versions of Windows 10, you might also be able to find the Recovery Drive in the main apps list, opened by clicking the Start menu button.
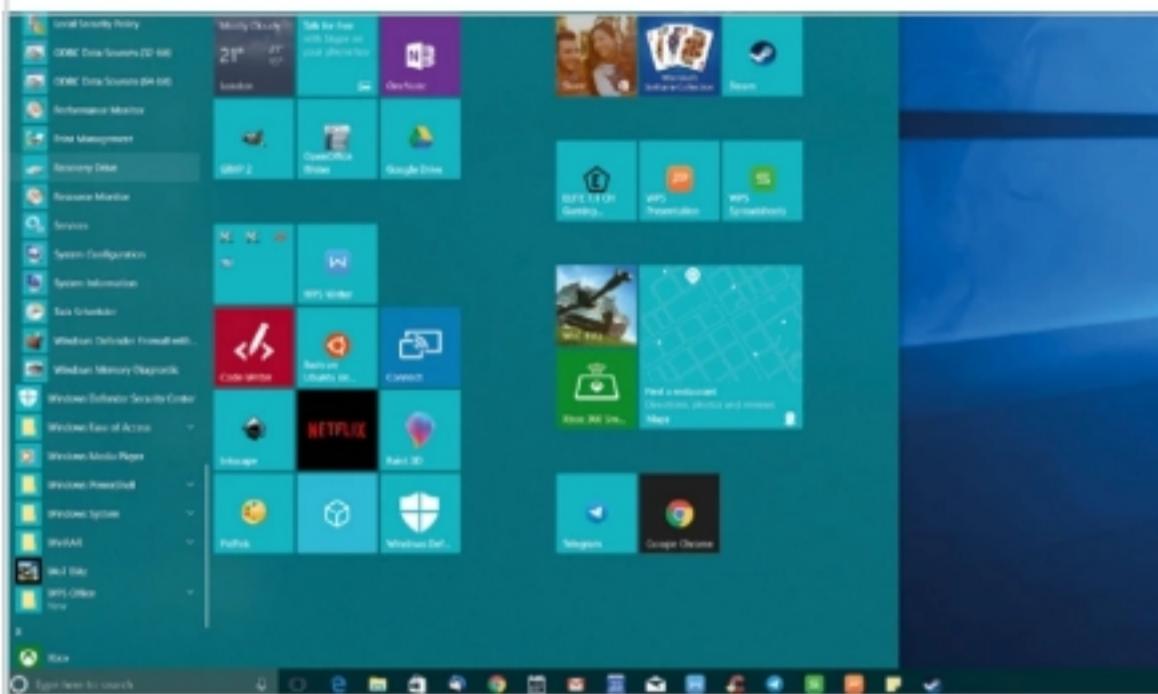
Step 6 Allow the software to "make changes to this PC" and the setup wizard will open. This first screen is where you choose whether you want to back up system files with the recovery drive, so you can use it to reinstall Windows 10. If you do, tick the checkbox and then click Next.
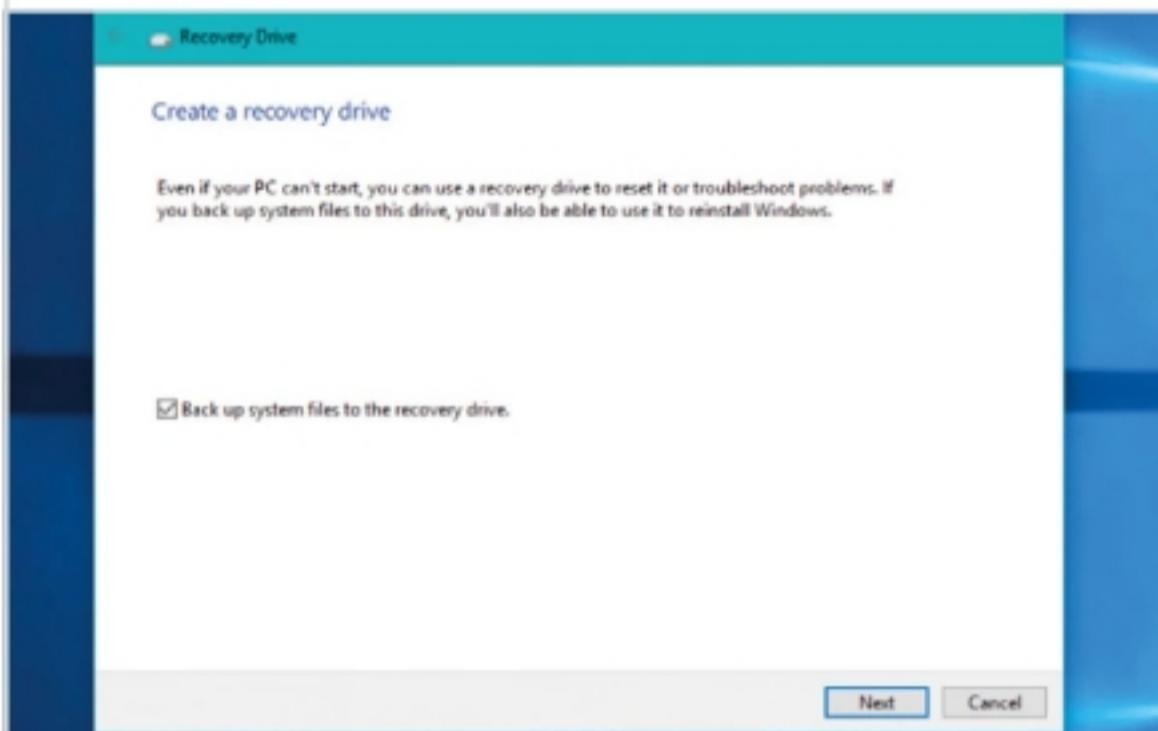
Step 7 After a few moments, you will be asked to select the USB flash drive you wish to use. If you only have one USB drive inserted, it will be the only one shown and will be automatically selected. You are reminded again how much storage space the drive needs, and that all existing data will be wiped.

Step 8 Click Create on the next screen and the process will begin. This may take a while to complete, so go make a coffee and leave it to run. A progress bar shows how far along it is, should you need to check. Do not remove the USB drive, or turn off your computer, before the process finishes.
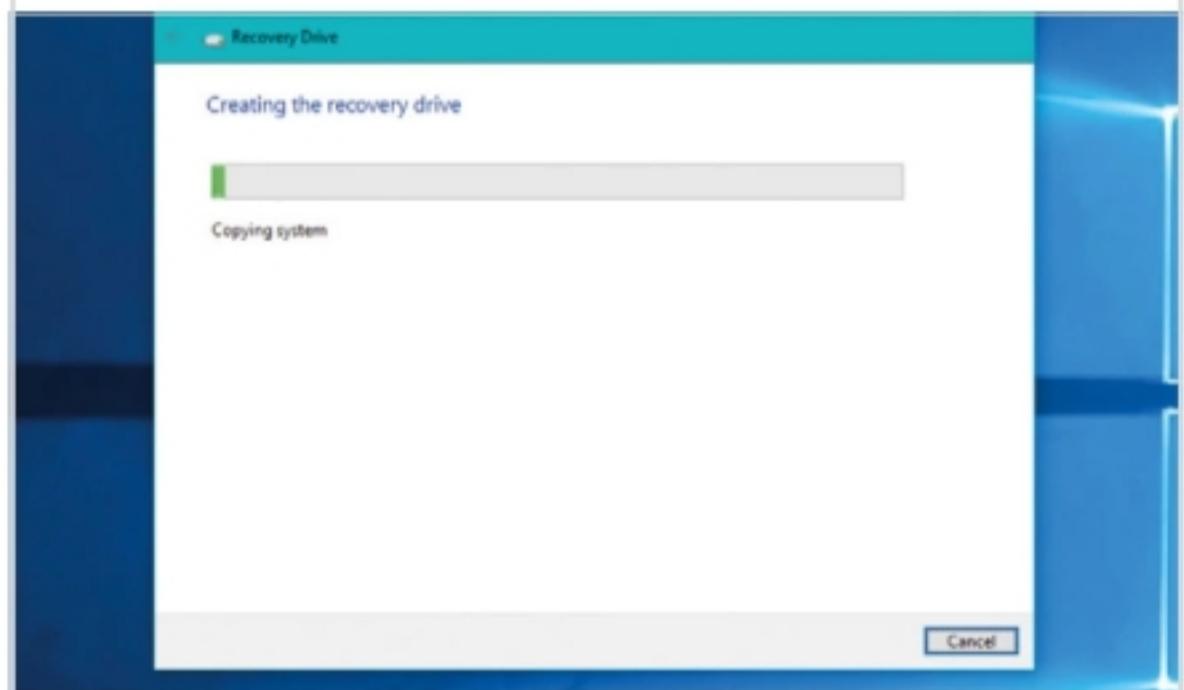
Step 9 When the process is complete, you should be prompted to delete the recovery partition on your PC, to save some space; as long as you plan to keep your recovery drive, this is safe to do. If you are not sure, you can leave the recovery partition in place; it can be deleted at a later date if you wish.
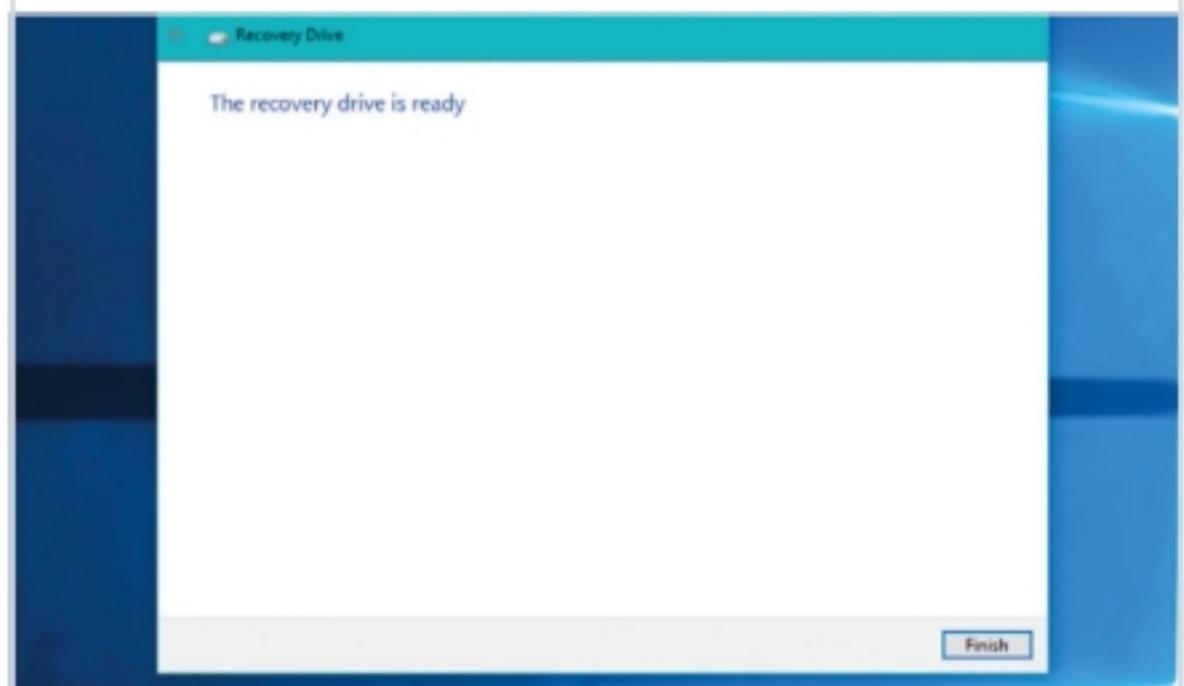
Step 10 If you did not already have a recovery partition on your computer, you won't see this step. You will simply be informed that the recovery drive is ready, and to click Finish. Remove the USB drive from your computer and put it somewhere safe. It is a good idea to label the drive so it is not reused.
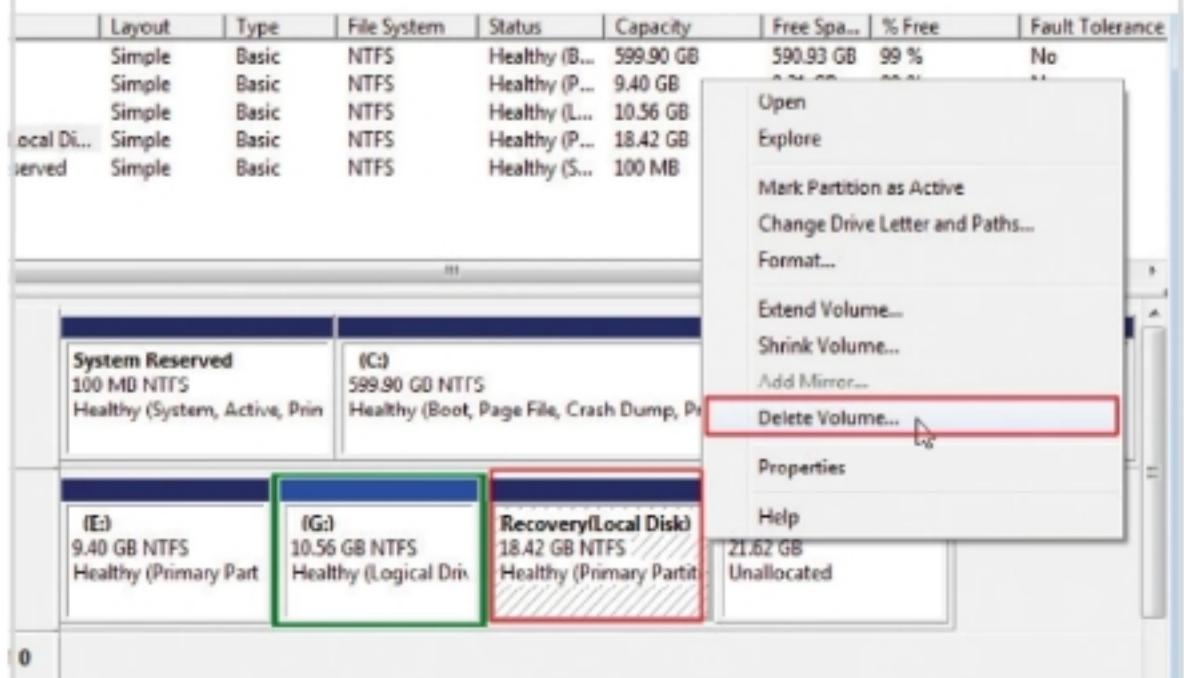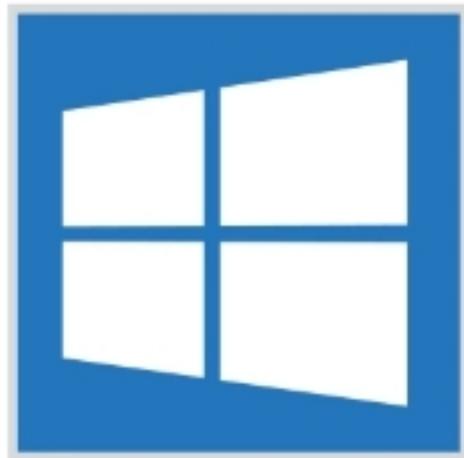
How to Create a Recovery Drive

A recovery drive is a useful way to ensure that you don't lose everything on your PC in the event of a critical malfunction. It can help you both troubleshoot and fix problems, even if the PC won't start as it normally would. All you need is a blank, formatted USB flash drive.

Protecting Your PC and Files

Creating a recovery drive is a relatively simple process. It does however take a bit of time to create but it's worth the effort as it could save you a lot of frustration in the future.

Step 1 The first thing you need to do is find a USB drive that is large enough and then make sure it is ready to be used. The USB drive you decide to use won't be able to be used for anything else like storing other files, etc. so make sure it is a spare, or bought specifically for the task.

Step 2 A basic Windows 10 recovery file will be less than 500MB but if you choose to include system files in the backup (recommended), so you can use it to reinstall Windows, you will need much more space. A basic recovery drive can be as small as 1GB but a full recovery drive needs to be at least 8GB.

Step 3 Your USB drive needs to be wiped of everything currently on it before the recovery drive is created. You can do this during the set up process later or you can format it yourself right now: a useful thing to know how to do. Insert your USB drive into a free USB slot on in your computer.
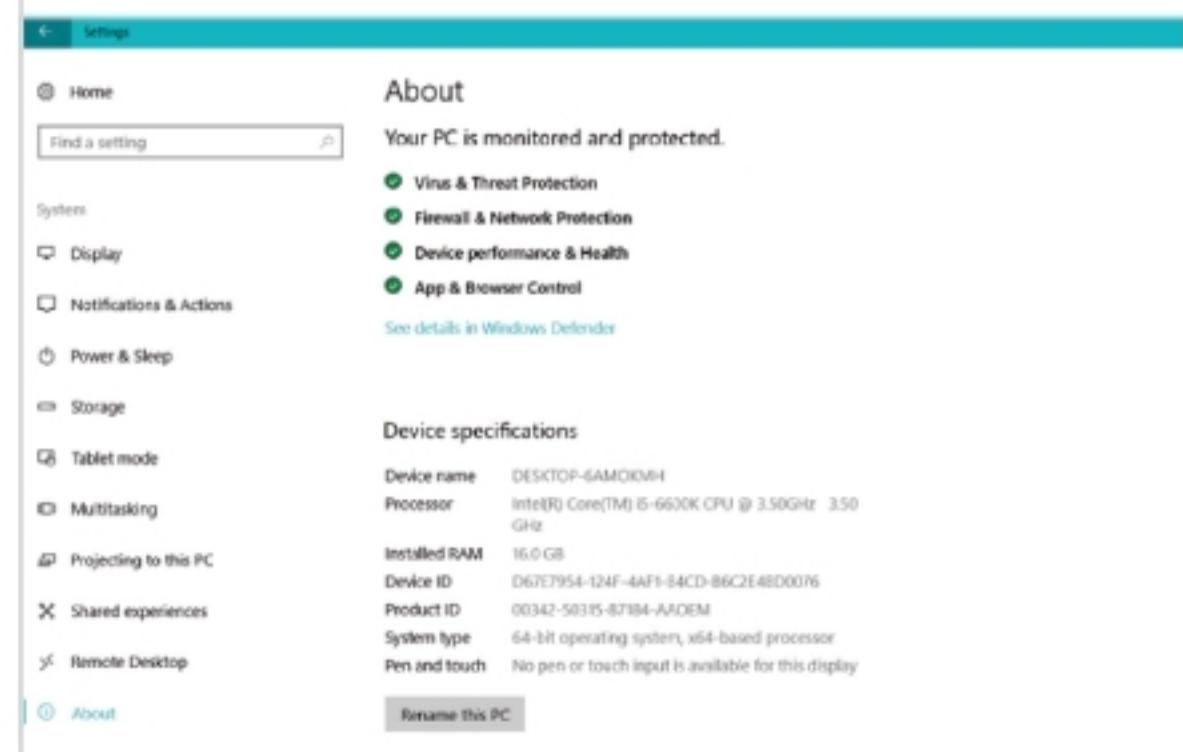
Step 4 Open the File Explorer on your computer and you should see the USB flash drive listed in the sidebar. It will probably be labelled as the (E:) or (F:) drive. Right-click on the drive label and select Format from the action menu. Leave the settings as default (should be FAT32) and then click Start.
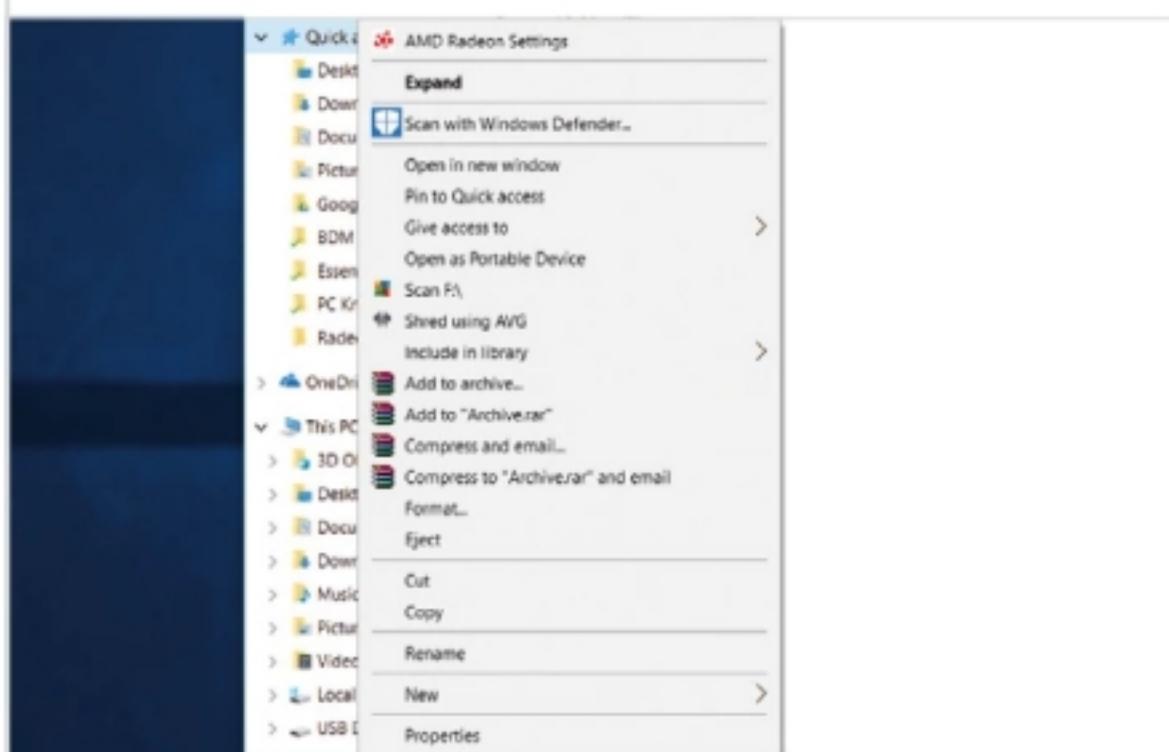
Set Up and Use SyncToy 2.1

You are now ready to begin choosing the folders you want to synchronise with SyncToy 2.1. These can be two local folders, or to a folder on an external drive.

Step 1 With the application open, you will be asked to choose a create a new folder pair (these are the two folders between which the app will sync). If you want to sync to an external drive, make sure it is plugged in and there is a folder created on it.
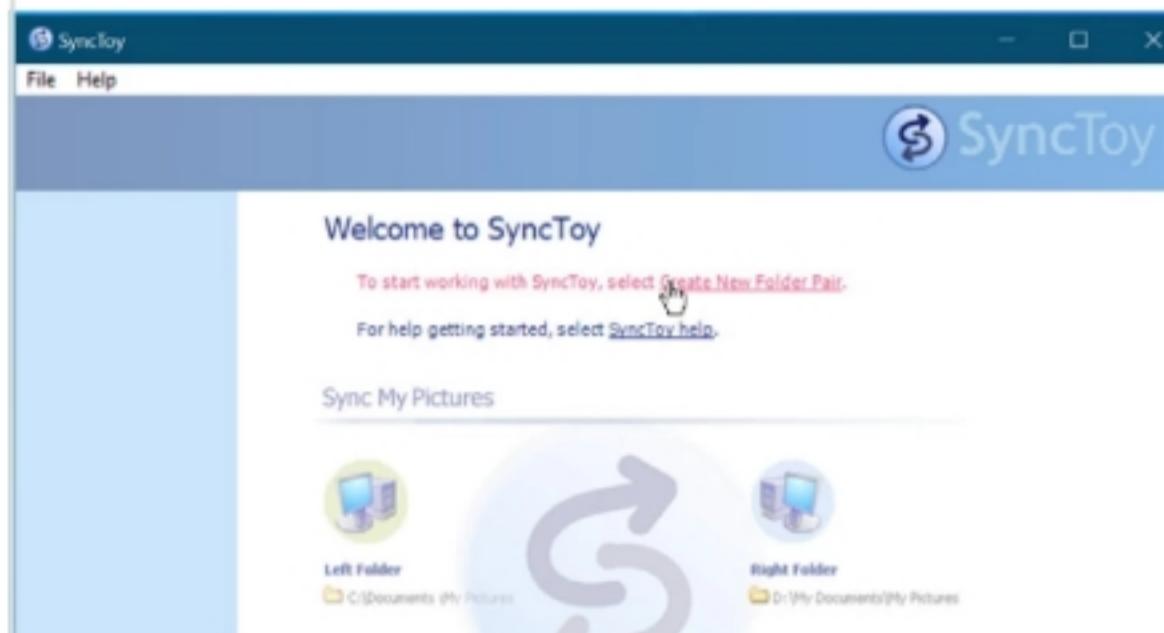
Step 2 Click on Browse on each of the left and right folders in turn and navigate to the folder you want to sync. The folder path will be shown in the text field for each. You can then click Next to continue with the setup process.

Step 3 Next, you need to choose the method of synchronisation. The Synchronize option will sync all new, deleted, or renamed files. What this means is that if you alter any file in either folder, the changes will be synced to the second folder.
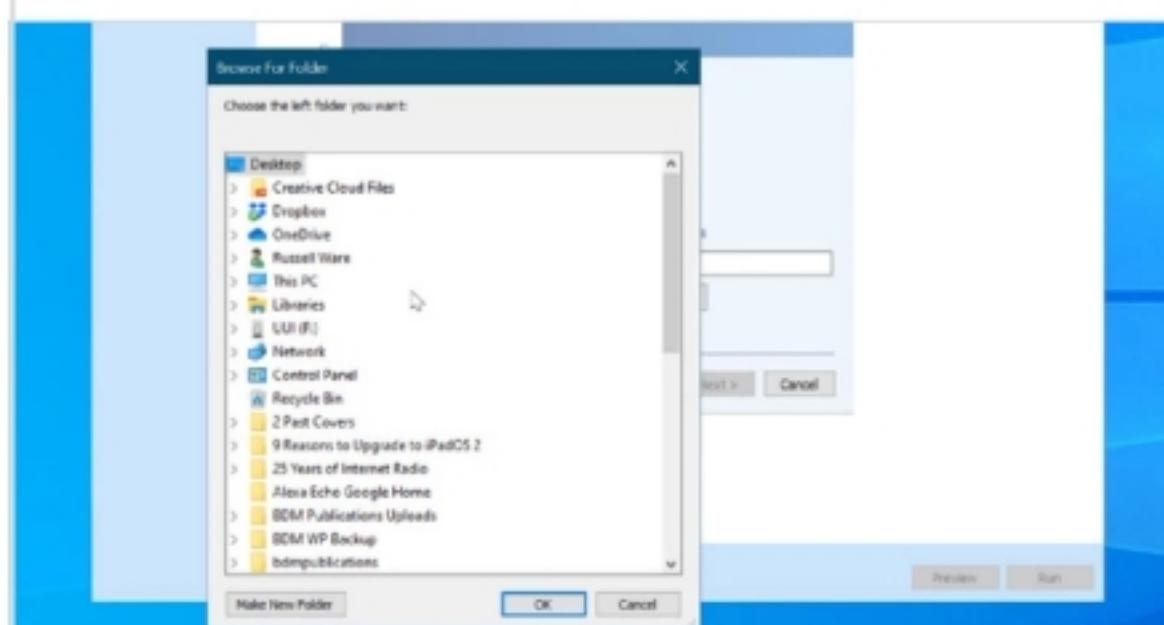
Step 4 The Echo option works in almost the same way except that changes are only applied from the left folder to the right and not the other way around. If you make changes to files in the right folder, those changes will not be synced to the left folder.
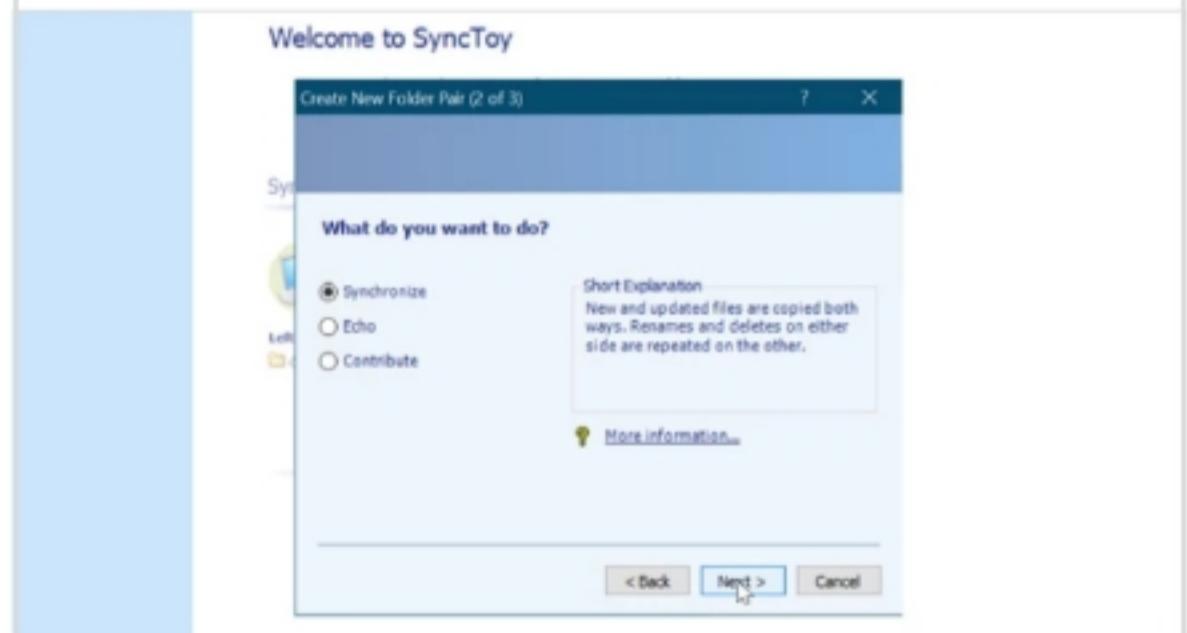
Step 5 The final option is Contribute and is probably the safest option for important files that just need a backup. You can rename (but not delete) files in the left folder to update the right folder. Changes to the right folder won't affect the left folder at all.
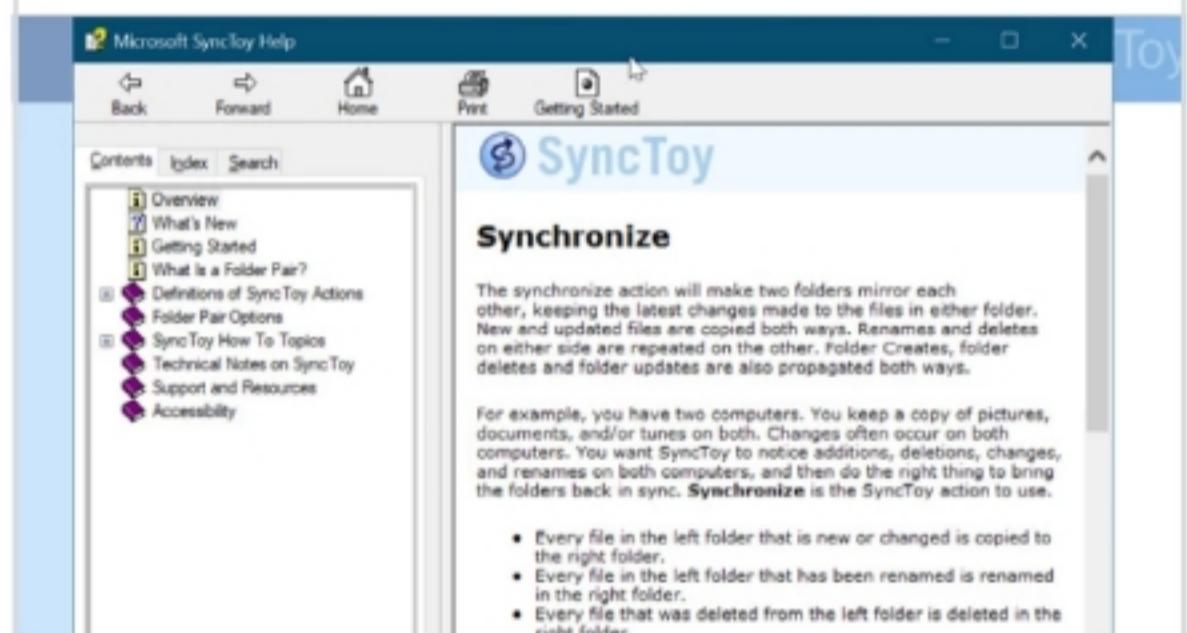
Step 6 Click Next, then give your folder pair a name (e.g. "Backup") and click Finish. You can now start syncing files between the folders. You can create multiple folder pairs simply by following the process again. You can schedule a sync in the app options.
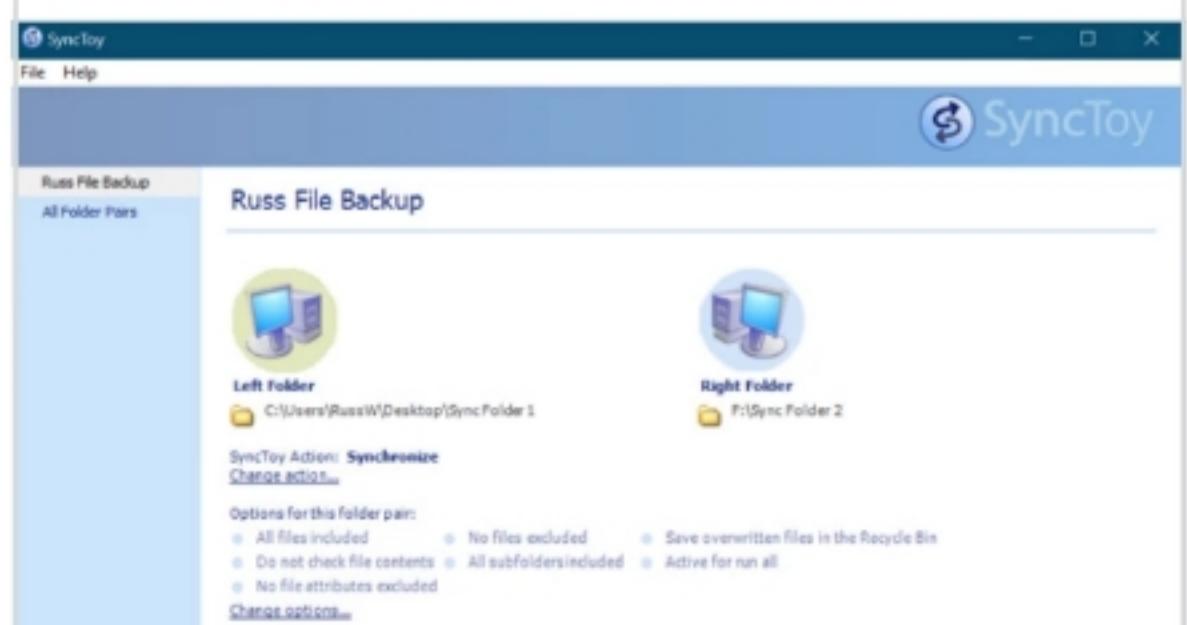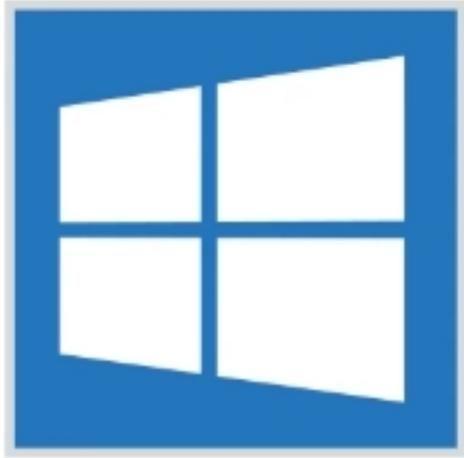
Easily Sync Files to an External Drive

SyncToy is a Microsoft tool which allows you to synchronise files easily between two folders, either two local folders, or one local and one on an external drive (including a USB flash drive). It is entirely free and is great for making easy file backups.

Installing SyncToy

Installing the SyncToy software is relatively simple. It can be downloaded for free from the Microsoft Download Center for both 32 and 64-bit systems.

Step 1   Download SyncToy 2.1 from the Microsoft Download Center (search for it on Microsoft.com). You will need to choose either the 32 or 64-bit version, so make sure you know what system you are running in Settings > System > About.

Step 2   Once the download is complete, double-click on the SyncToy setup package and follow the instructions to begin the installation. You will need to agree to some standard software license terms to continue through the setup.

Step 3   When you reach the point of choosing the install destination folder, you will have the option to install SyncToy for everyone who uses the computer (all users) or just to install it for the account currently being used.

Step 4   After a few more clicks the installation is complete. You can then close the setup wizard, and you should see the SyncToy 2.1 icon on the desktop (or whichever folder you chose to download it to). Double-click the icon to begin using it.

Step 5 For this example, let's use an internal second hard drive. Make sure that the correct drive (it could be a high capacity USB stick or even a portable USB hard drive) is selected, and then click the Next button to continue.
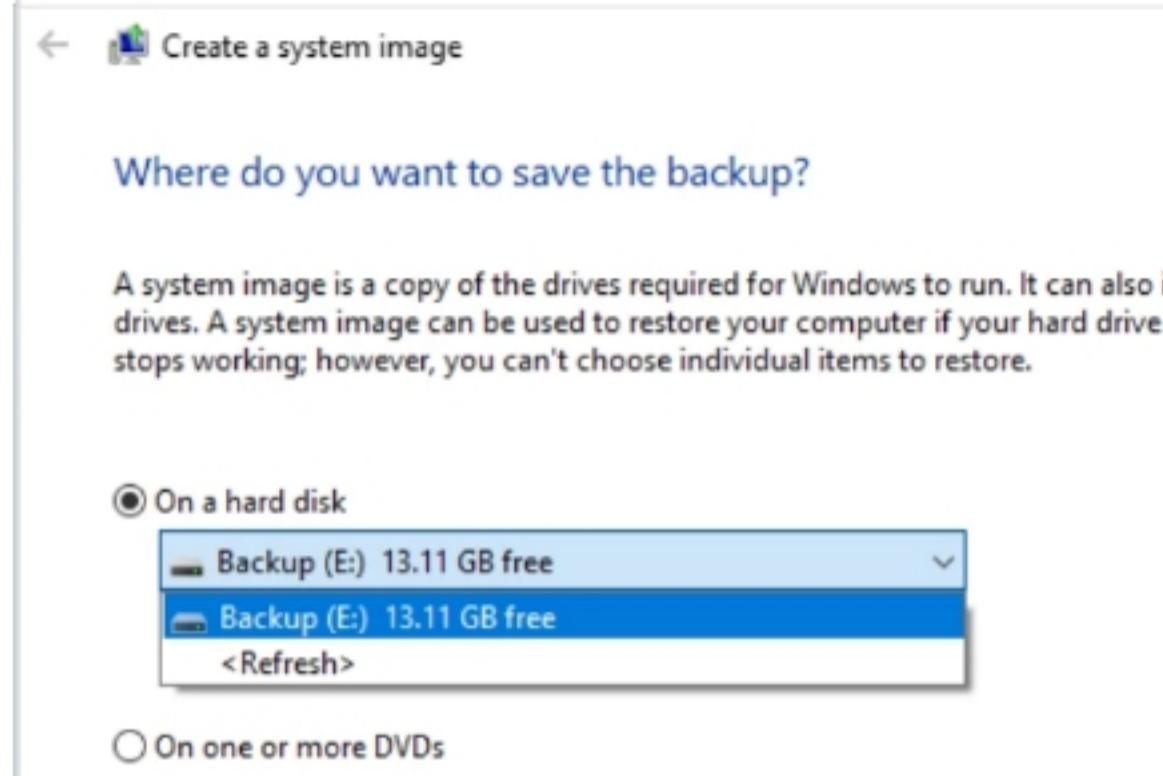
Step 6 The next window displays the drives included in the system imaging process. In this example, the C:\ drive, the System drive and the System Reserved partition are all to be backed up. When it comes to restoring the system, you'll need both partitions for Windows 10 to be able to boot up correctly.
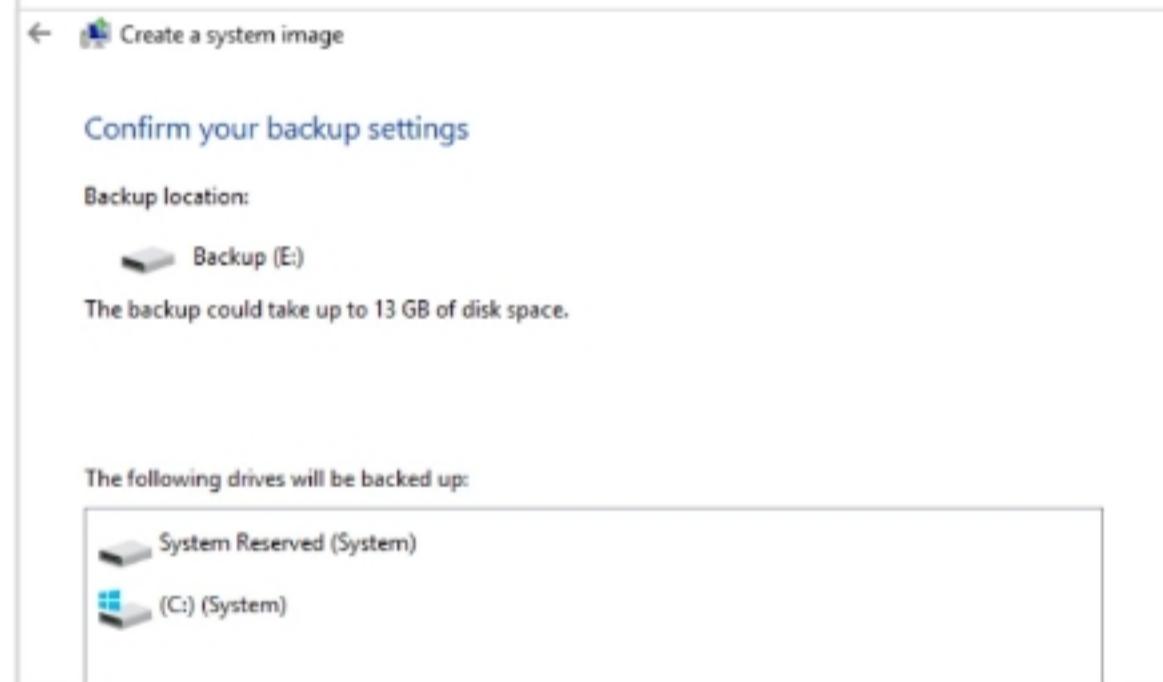
Step 7 When you're ready to continue, click the Start Backup button. This begins the imaging process, which can take some time depending on the amount of space used on the C:\ drive and the speed of the drive to which you're writing. Allocate ample time if you're writing to DVDs.
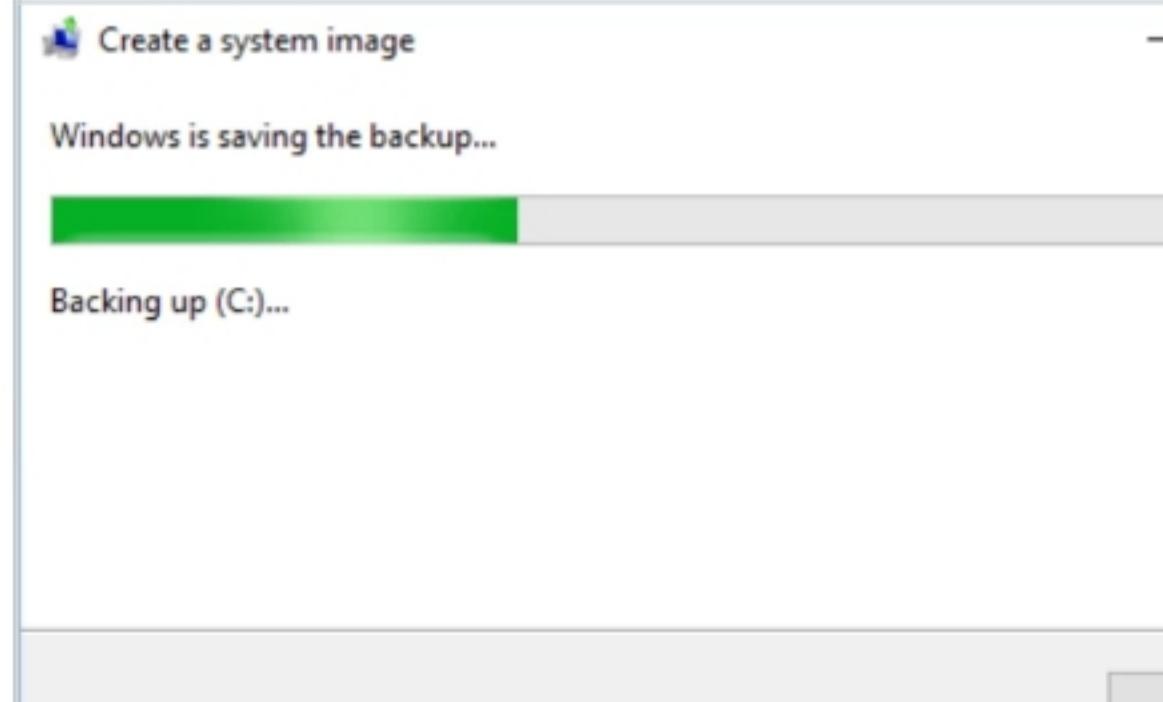
Step 8 Once the process is complete, Windows will ask you to create a System Repair Disc. This disc allows you to boot into the environment where you are able to launch the system image restore.
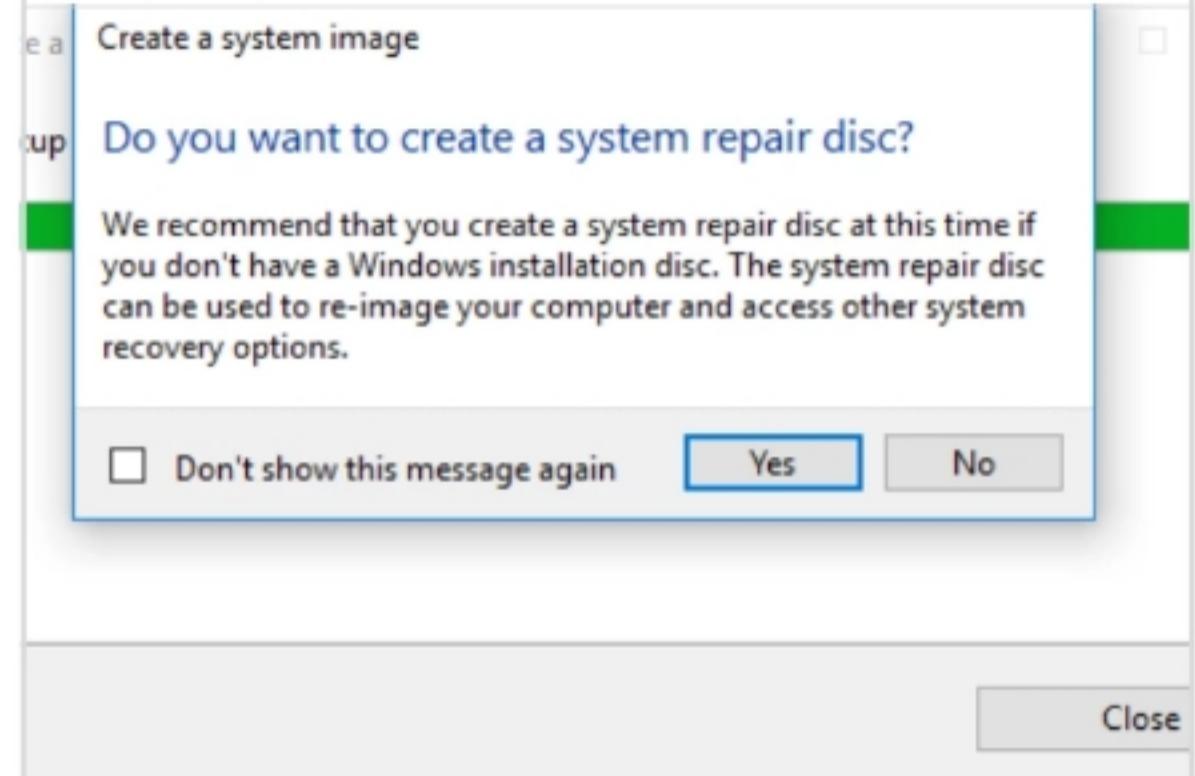
Step 9 If you click Yes to creating the System Repair Disc, you need to make sure you have a blank DVD to hand. Follow the on-screen instructions and click on the Create Disc button to burn the repair files to the disc.
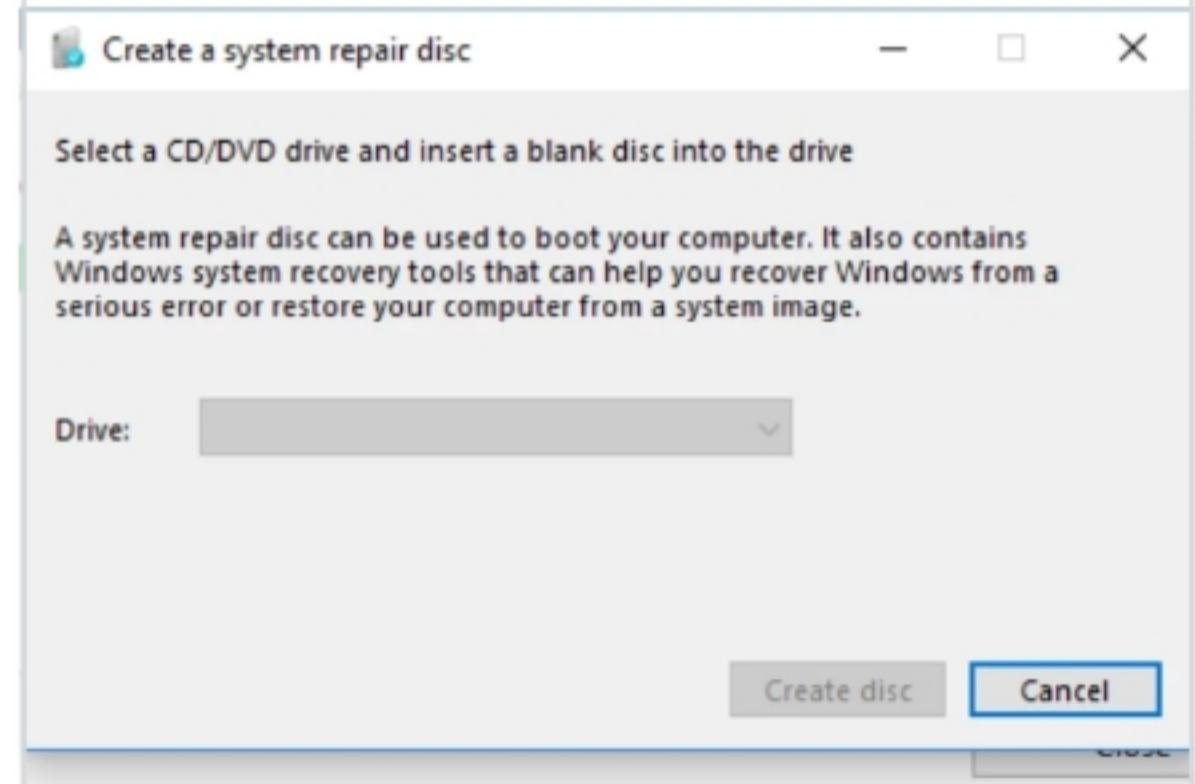
Step 10 Should you need to restore Windows 10 from the system image, you can boot into the System Repair Disc and select the System Image Recovery option from within the Advanced Options of the Trouble Shoot menu. Follow the instructions, and within minutes, Windows 10 is back as it was when the system image was taken.
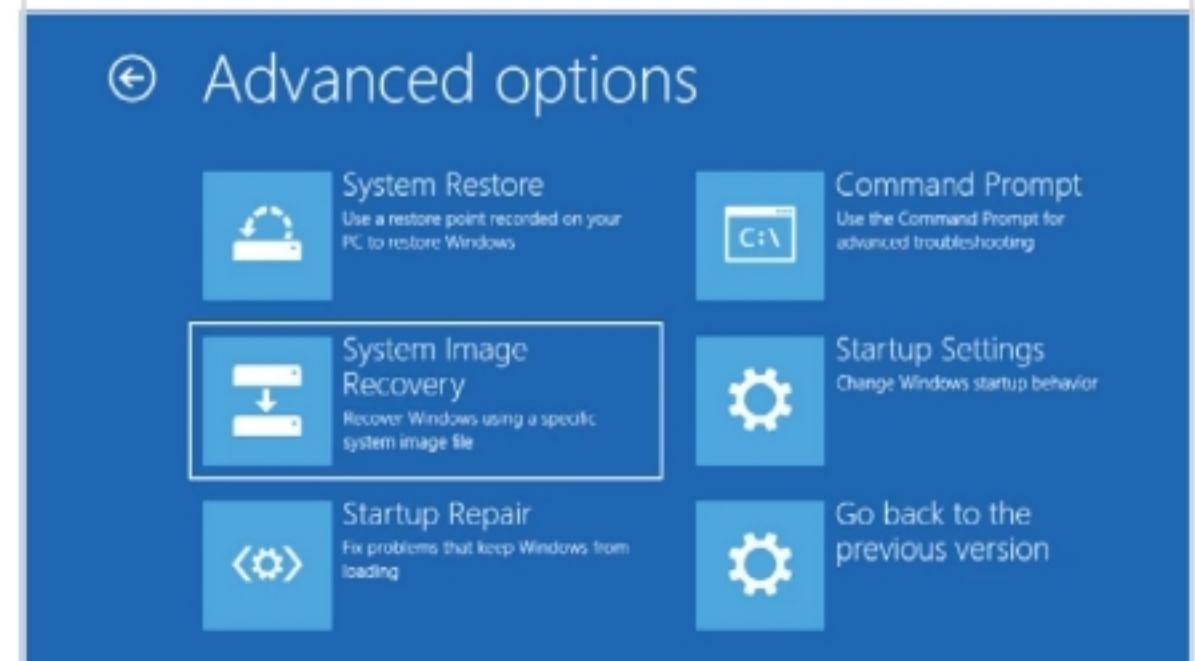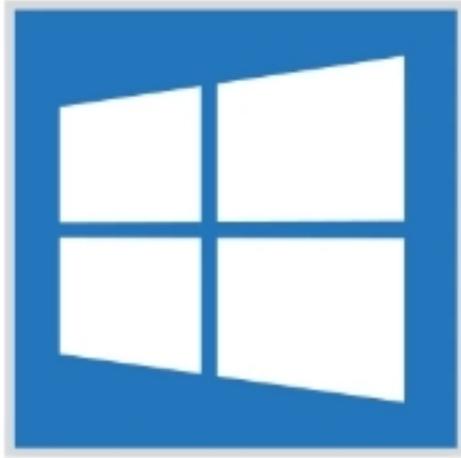
Create a Windows 10 System Image

Backing up your files is perfectly fine, but in the event of having to wipe your hard drive and start again, getting everything back in order can be time-consuming. However, creating a system image means you can almost instantly restore the entire system.

System Imaging

A system image is essentially a snapshot of your entire system. This can then be quickly restored and conveniently saves you from having to reinstall Windows 10, all your programs and your data.

Step 1 To begin, click on the Windows Start button and navigate to Settings > Update & Security > Backup. From within the Backup console window, where you were in the previous tutorial, click on the Go to Backup and Restore (Windows 7) link under the Looking for an older backup section.

Step 2 This launches a new window, the Backup and Restore (Windows 7) console. Microsoft has kept this feature intact through Windows 8.1 and 10 purely due to compatibility support for backups created under older versions of the OS. To the left, there are two links, click on the Create a system image link.
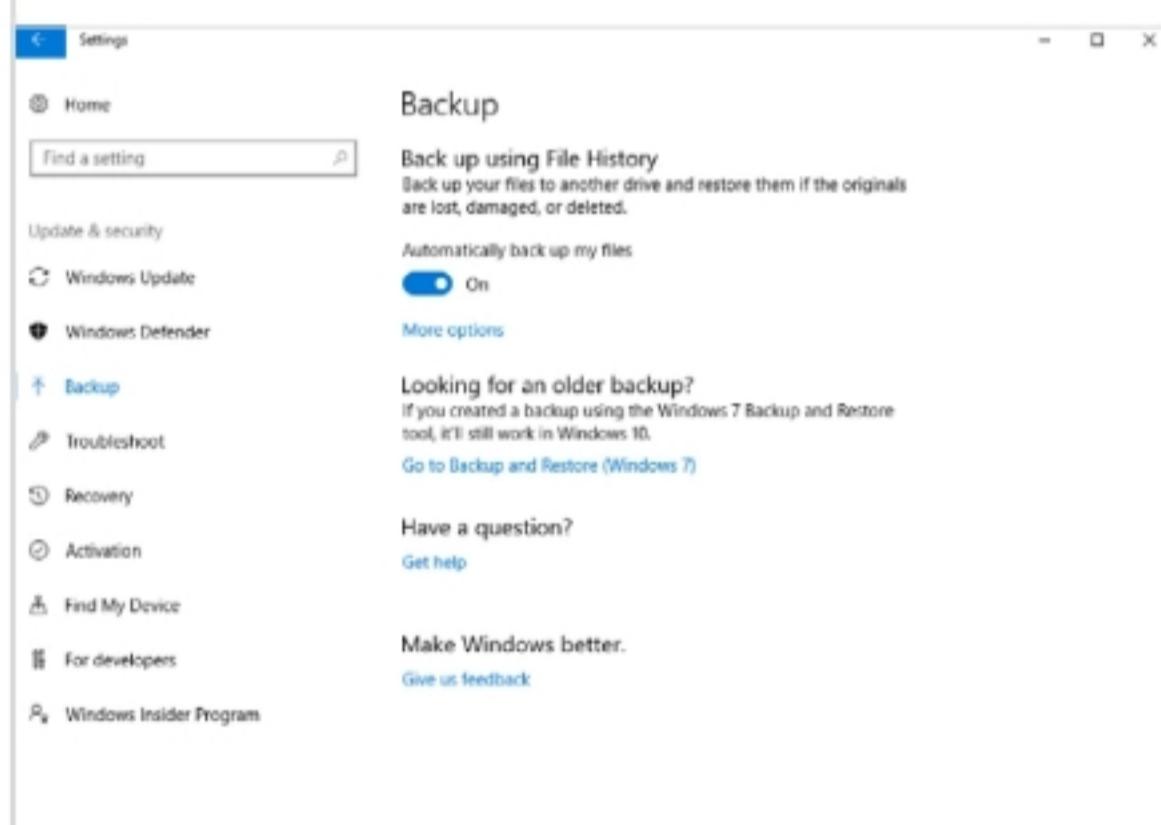
Step 3 Windows now scans your system for a drive capable of housing the system image files. You may need to make some changes to any drives according to what messages you get back from the scan. In this example, the drive we're using needs to be formatted as NTFS before Windows 10 can use it.
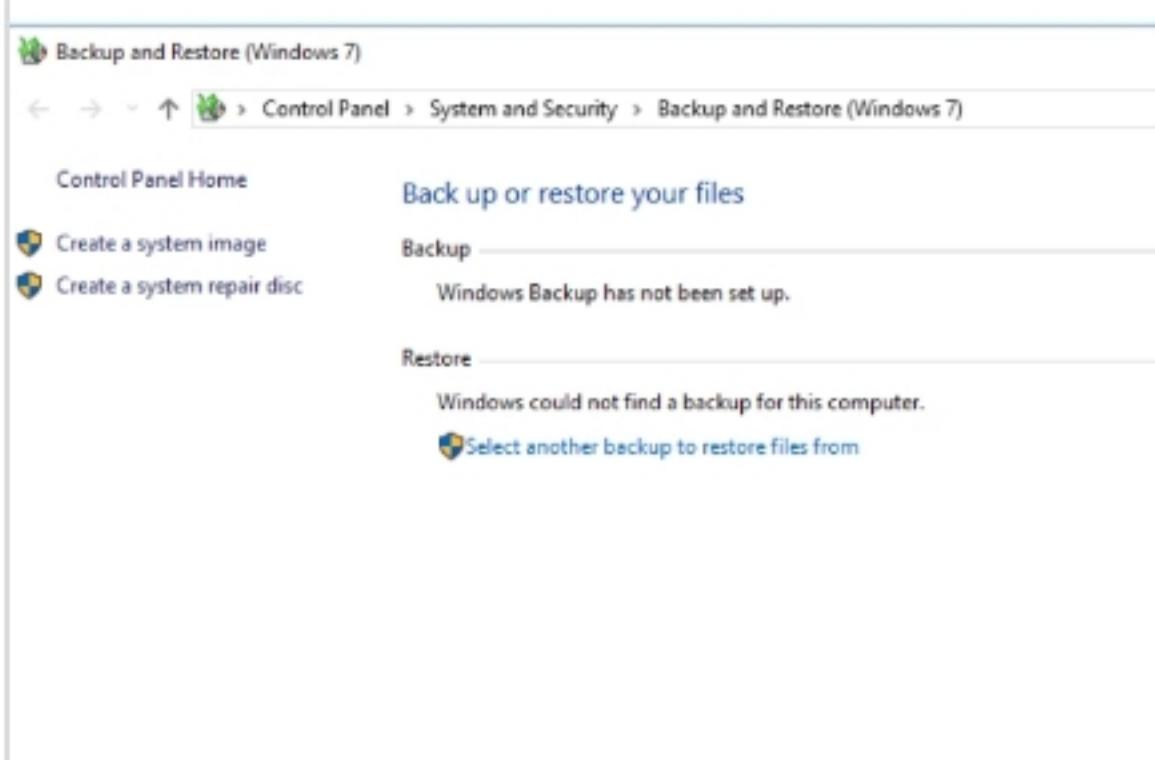
Step 4 Providing you've met the requirements, you're offered a choice of to where the system image can be written. A drive is the quickest solution when it comes to restoring the image, but you can opt for DVDs; it depends on the size of the image as to how many DVDs you need. You can even select a network location.

Using Windows ReadyBoost

If you don't want to spend out on more RAM right now, there are ways you can attempt to optimise your existing memory performance. One way is to use ReadyBoost.

Step 1 ReadyBoost is a way to boost memory performance by creating an extra memory cache on an external USB-connected drive, such as a flash drive. You will need a USB drive with at least 500MB of free space and a high data transfer rate. A USB 3.0 drive can peak at a data rate of 600MB/s.

Step 3 Select the ReadyBoost tab, then select 'Use this device'. Windows 10 determines if the device can use ReadyBoost. If it is not able to use the feature, it will let you know. Windows will then determine how much free space to assign to memory. Click Ok to reserve this space on the connected drive.

Step 2 Insert the drive into a free USB port on your PC and then open the File Explorer. Right-click on the name of the drive in the left-hand sidebar and select Properties from the action menu. Be aware that computers with a solid-state drive (SSD) installed, will not be able to take advantage of ReadyBoost.
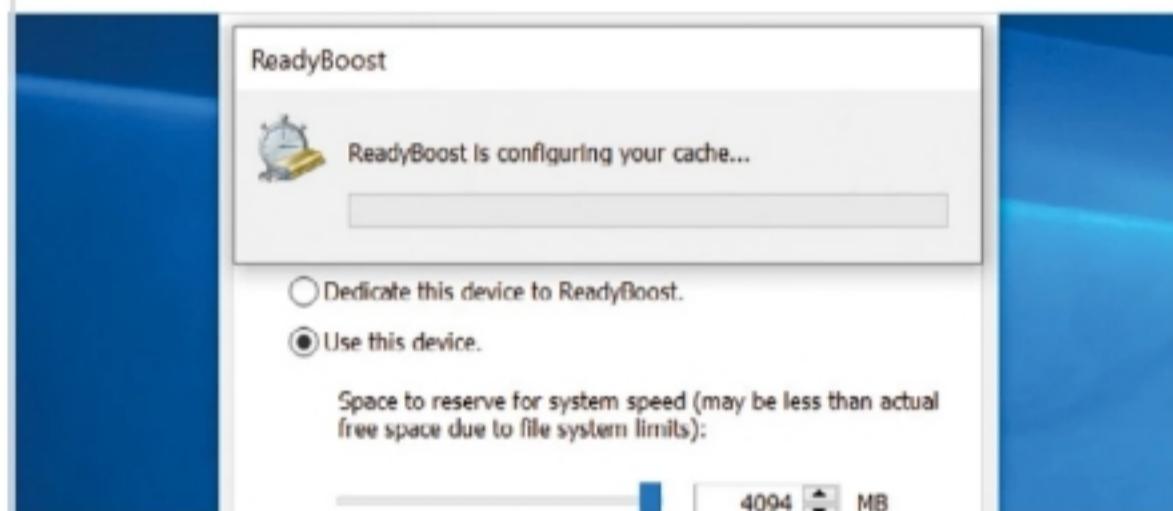
Step 4 If you look at the contents of the drive in File Explorer, you will see a file called ReadyBoost.sfcache. This file shows how much space is reserved for ReadyBoost. If you don't have a USB flash drive handy, you can sometimes use a smartphone, connected via USB, as a temporary ReadyBoost drive
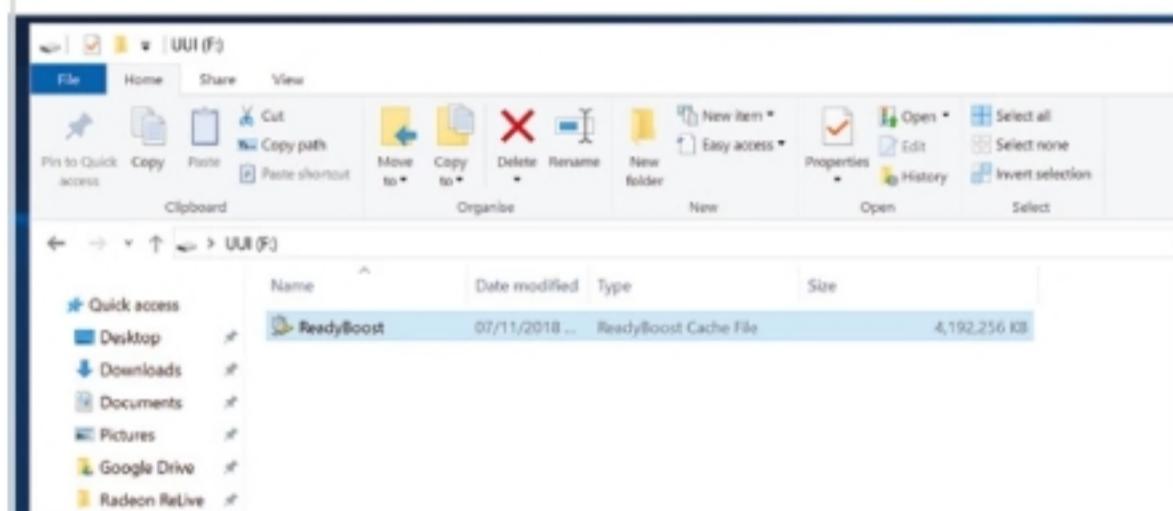
CHANGE PAGING FILE SIZE

The paging file is an area on your hard disk that Windows uses like memory. Increasing the paging file size can help improve your PC's performance.

Step 1 In the search box on the taskbar, type 'advanced system' and then select 'View advanced system settings'. In System Properties, on the Advanced tab, select Settings in the Performance area, and then select the Advanced tab > Change in the Virtual memory area.
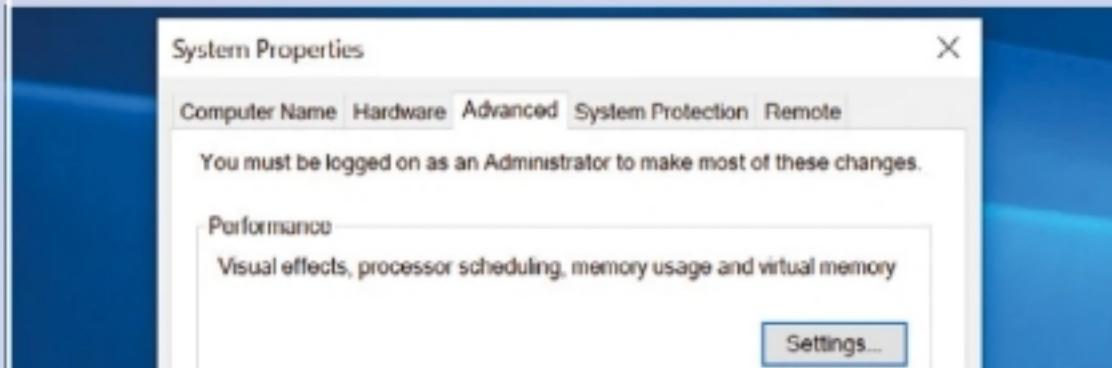
Step 2 In Performance Options, Clear the 'Automatically manage paging file size for all drives' check box. Select Custom size, then enter an initial size (in MB) and maximum size in the corresponding boxes. Select Set > OK and then restart your PC by selecting the Start button > Power > Restart.
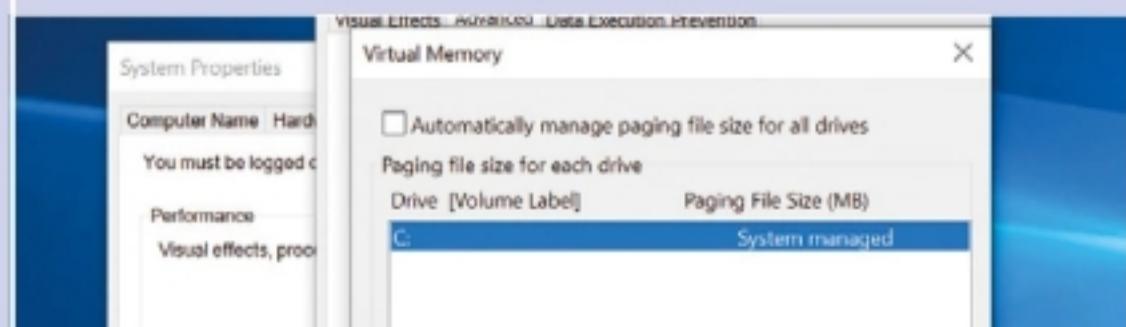
Check and Manage RAM Usage

Adding RAM, or Random Access Memory, is a good way to give your PC an instant boost but before you go to the expense and trouble of installing new RAM modules, it is worth checking what is using your existing RAM and whether it can be optimised.

Checking Memory and Memory Usage

The first thing you need to do, when trying to optimise RAM usage and performance, is check how much you have and how it is used.

Step 1 To check up on your RAM, you need to open the Task Manager. Press Ctrl + Alt + Delete on the keyboard and then select Task Manager from the list that appears. If Task Manager opens showing just a simple list of tasks, click the More details button to see a more advanced view.

Step 3 If it seems like most of your available RAM is regularly being used, and if less than 4GB is installed, consider adding more RAM. You can find out what kind of RAM your PC model uses by looking at the memory info in Task Manager. Then visit the PC manufacturer's website for more specific info.

Step 2 Click the Performance tab at the top and then the Memory tab on the left side. You can now see how much you have in total and then check the graph to see how much RAM is being used. Try opening a few different apps while Task Manager is open, to see RAM usage increase or change.
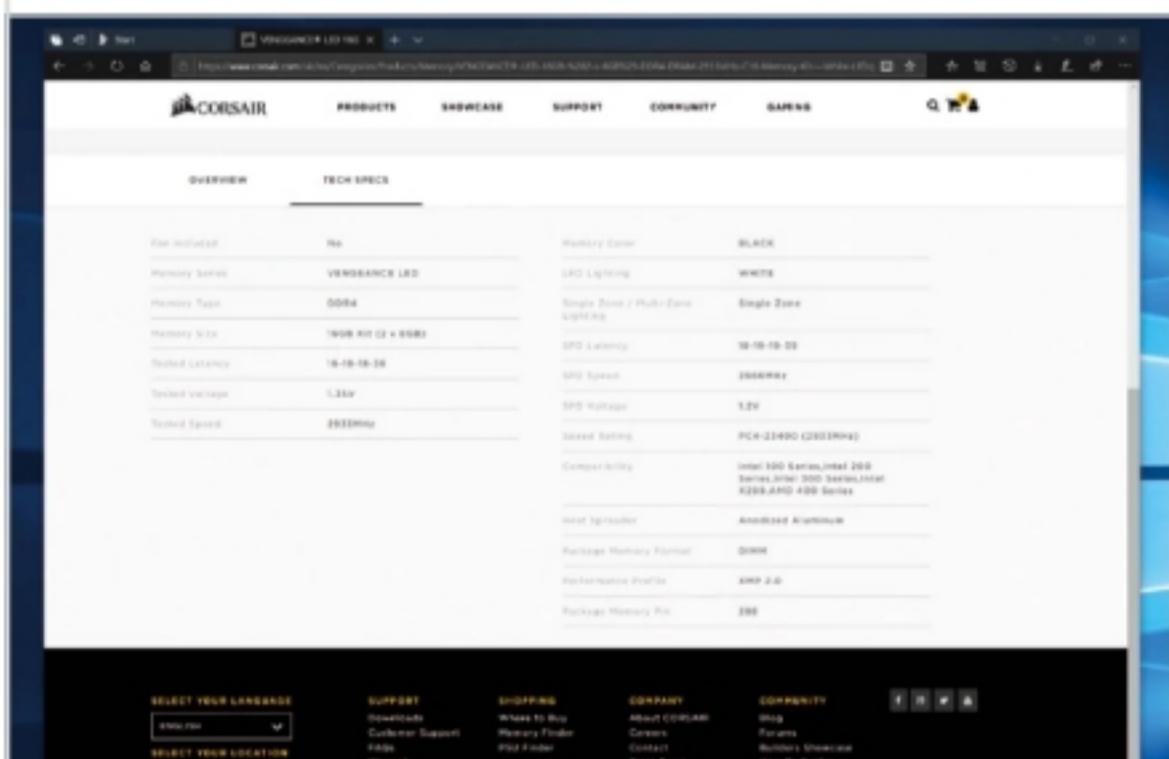
Step 4 In theory, Windows 10 (64-bit) can run on a PC with just 2 GB of RAM but in reality you will want at least 4 GB if you plan regular use. If you can afford to double this to 8 GB, you will not only instantly improve performance but also add some time to the long term lifespan of your computer.
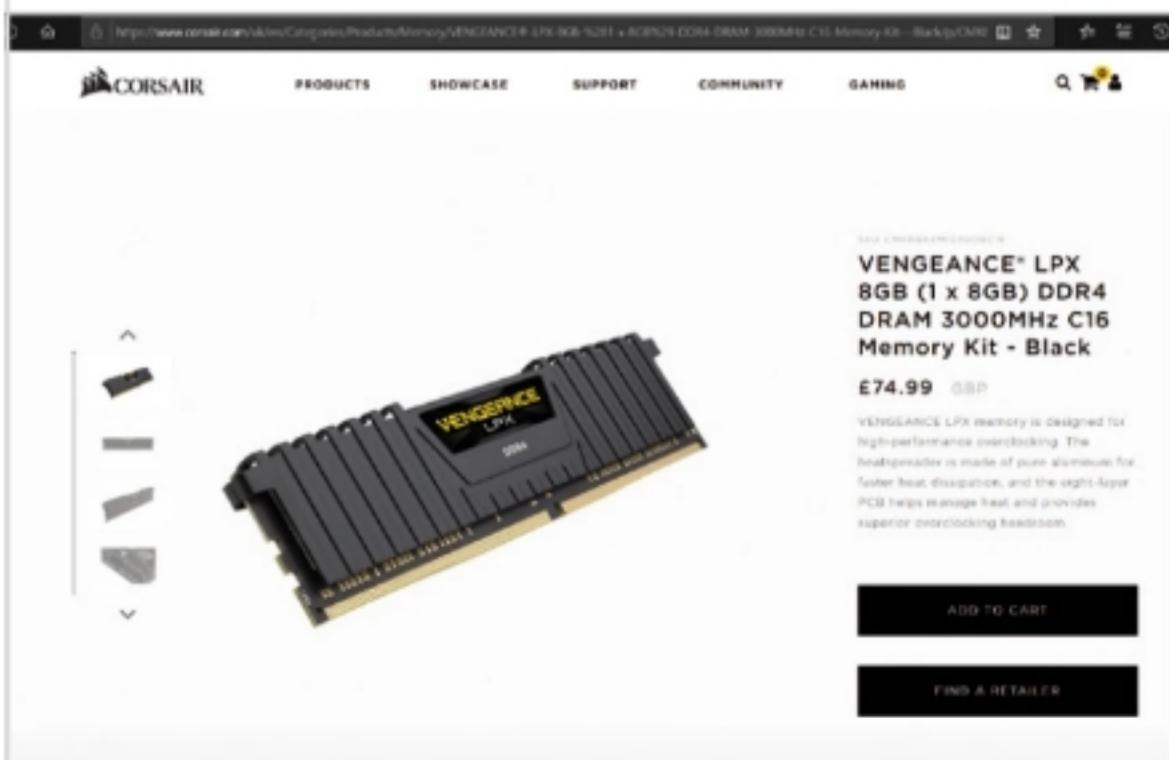
Resizing a Volume

If your disk is set up as one big volume and you want to create an extra partition for a second volume, you will need to know how to resize the existing one.

Step 1 You will need to make sure that there is enough free space on the drive before you can shrink a volume. For example, if you have a 500GB volume which has 200GB of data already stored on it, you will only be able to shrink it by a maximum of 300GB, the amount of remaining space.
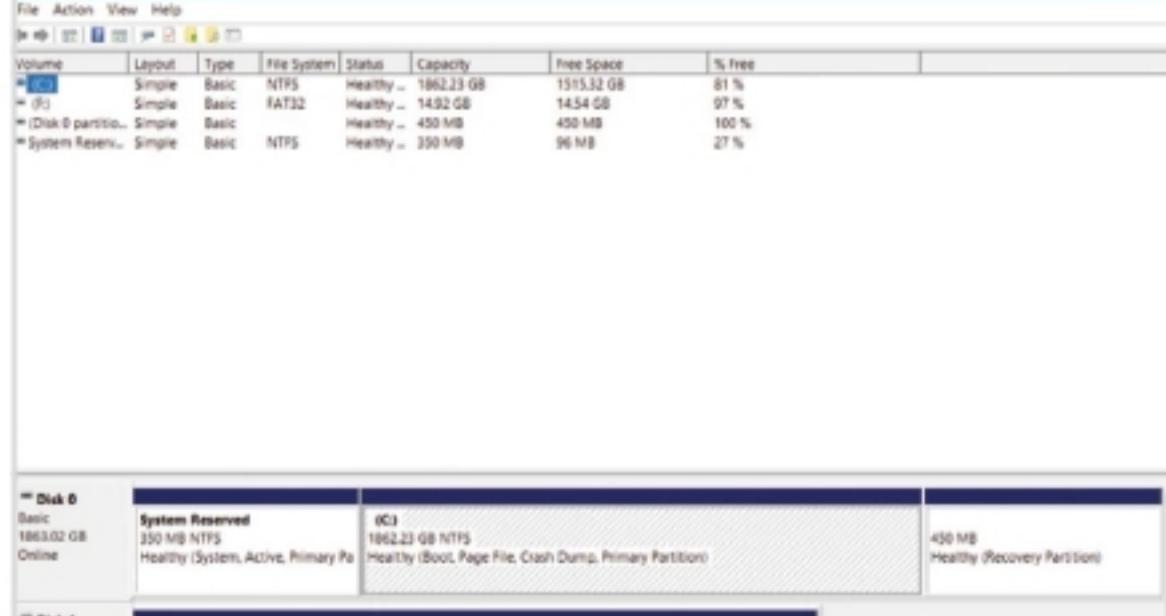
Step 2 Right click on the volume you want to shrink in either the top panel or the bottom one and click 'Shrink volume' from the Action menu. You will then need to enter the amount you want to shrink the volume by in MB. So if you wanted to shrink it by approximately 500GB, you enter '500000MB'.
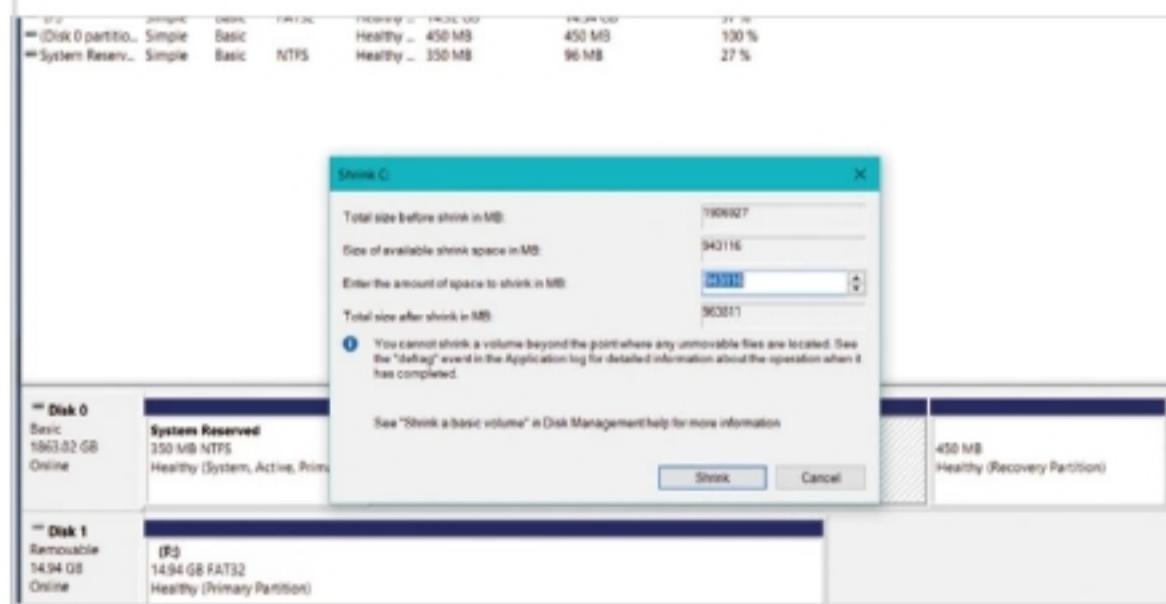
Step 3 When you have clicked the Shrink button, you should see that the disk now contains the shrunken volume and some new, unallocated space. If desired, you could now extend the volume back into that space, by right-clicking and selecting 'Extend volume' from the Action menu.
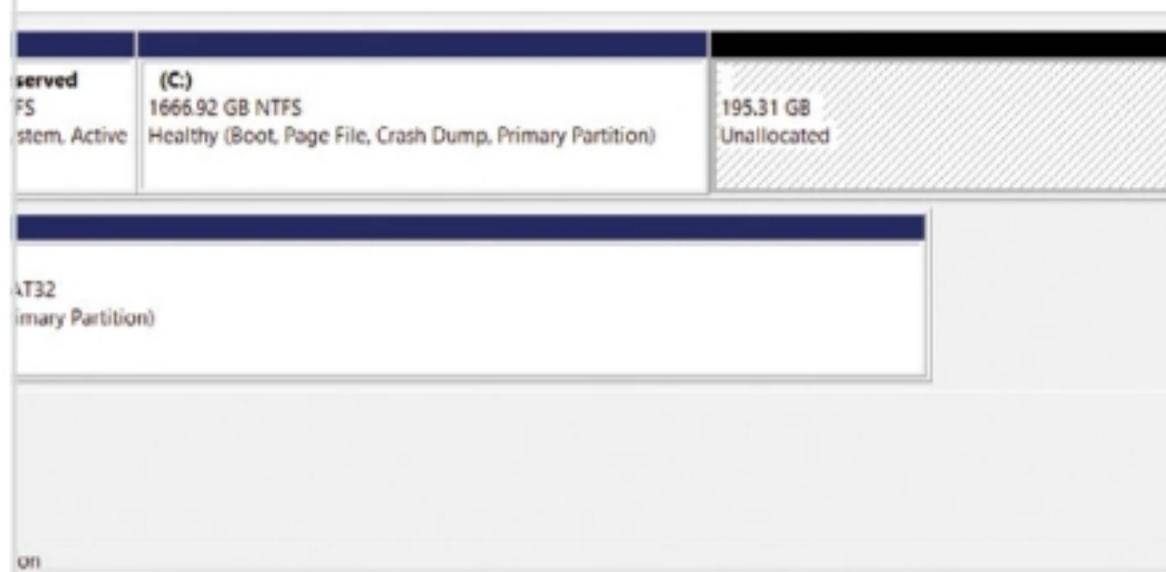
Step 4 To create a new volume in that unallocated space, right-click on it and select New Simple Volume from the Action menu. In the New Simple Volume Wizard window, click Next to get started. Specify the volume size you want to create and then assign it a drive letter on the next screen.
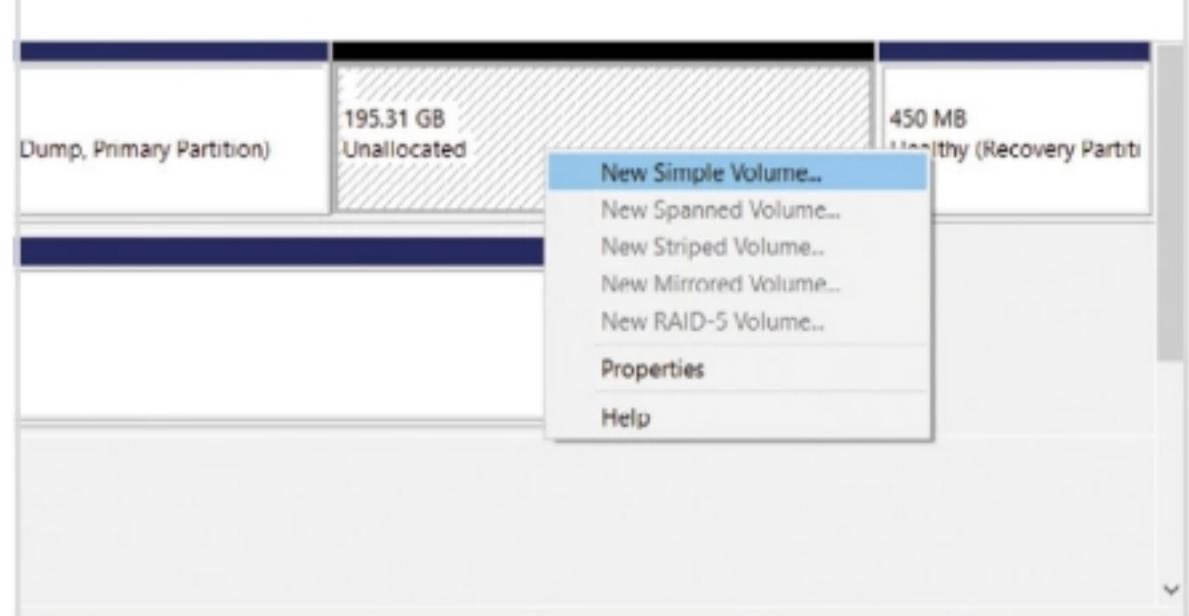
Step 5 You will then need to decide whether to format the partition. You will need to format it before you can begin using it but if you are planning on installing a second operating system, in order to dual-boot, you will need to let the new OS format the partition during its installation.
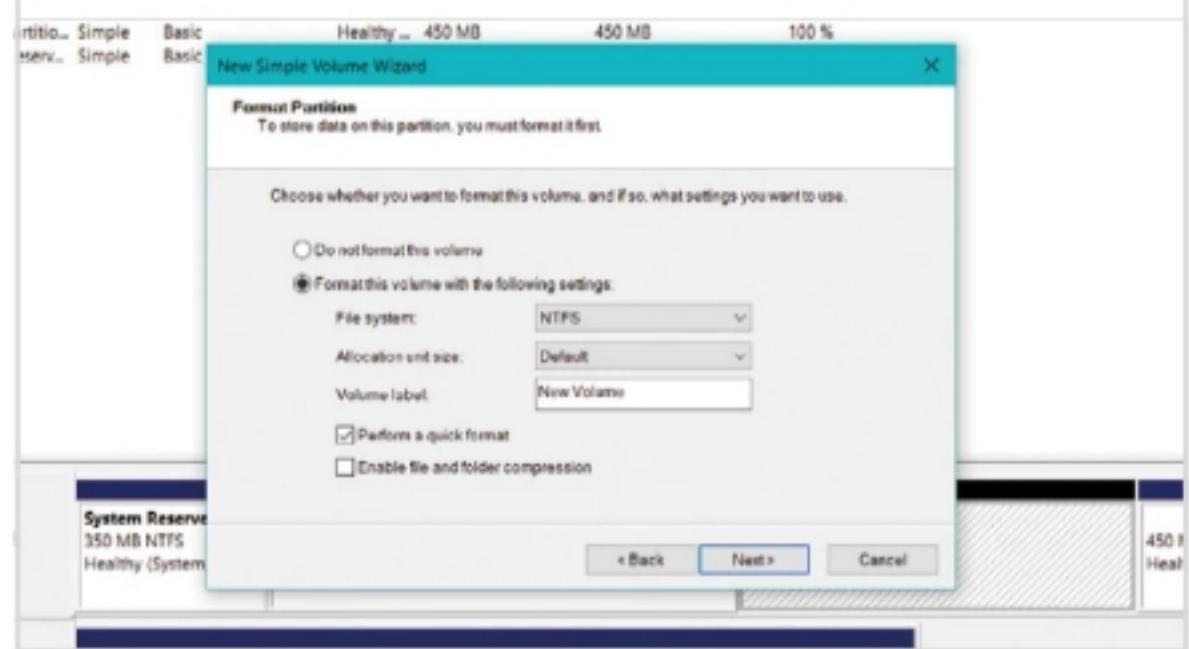
Step 6 Otherwise, go ahead and format the disk; pick a file system to use and assign a volume label. Click Next when you're ready and then click the Finish button; Windows will now start to create the volume and, if you chose to, format it. When finished, you will see your new volume listed.
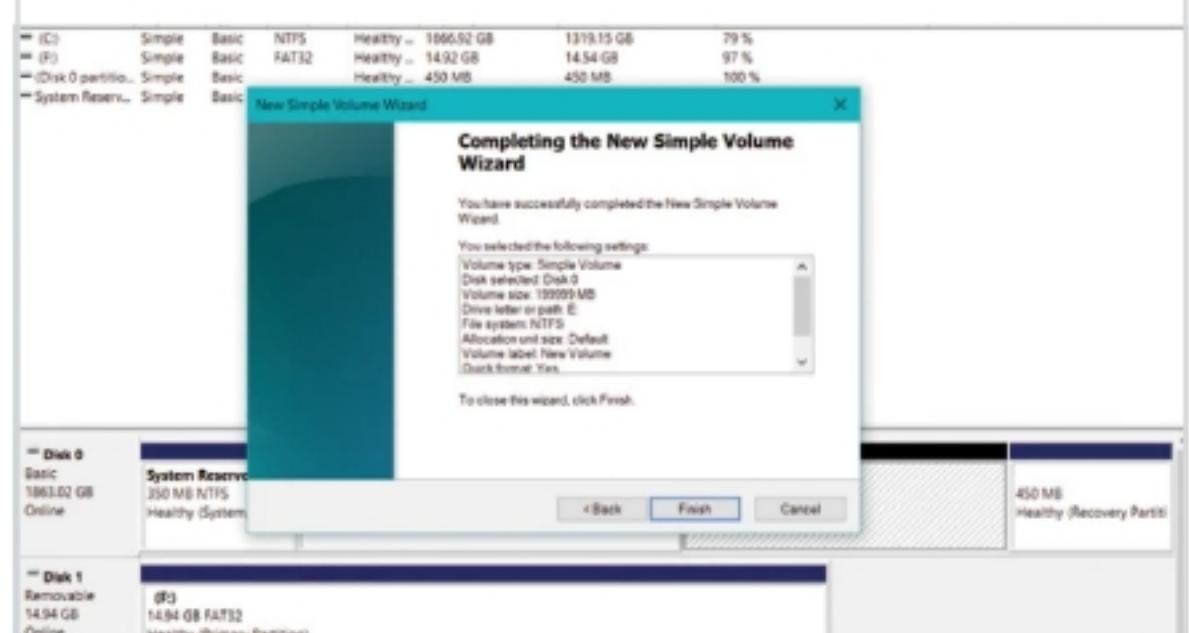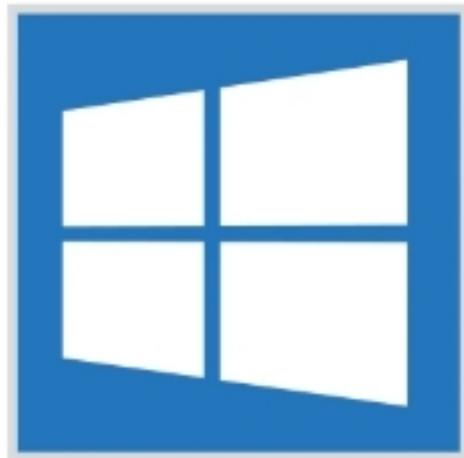
Manage Disk Partitions in Windows 10

Disk partitioning is the creation of one or more separate regions on a PC hard disk (hard drive) and all modern drives need at least one partition to begin storing files. A partition could be the size of the whole drive or just a tiny part of it.

The Disk Management Tool

There are several free programs available for creating partitions but the Disk Management tool is just as good and built right in to Windows 10.

Step 1 The first thing you need to do is find the Disk Management tool. The easiest way to open the tool is to use the hidden Start button menu. Right-click on the Start menu button and select Disk Management from the menu that appears. There are several system tools here, so it is a useful trick to know.

Step 2 The Disk Management tool shows all of your internal and removable drives (even USB flash drives, etc.) along with details of the capacity and current amount of space being used. Depending how your hard drive was initially configured, you will see one or more partitions in place.

Step 3 You can use the seemingly simple Disk Management tool to resize, create, delete and format partitions and volumes, as well as change their drive letters and all without downloading or paying for any other software. You can also simply use it to check the health of your disks.
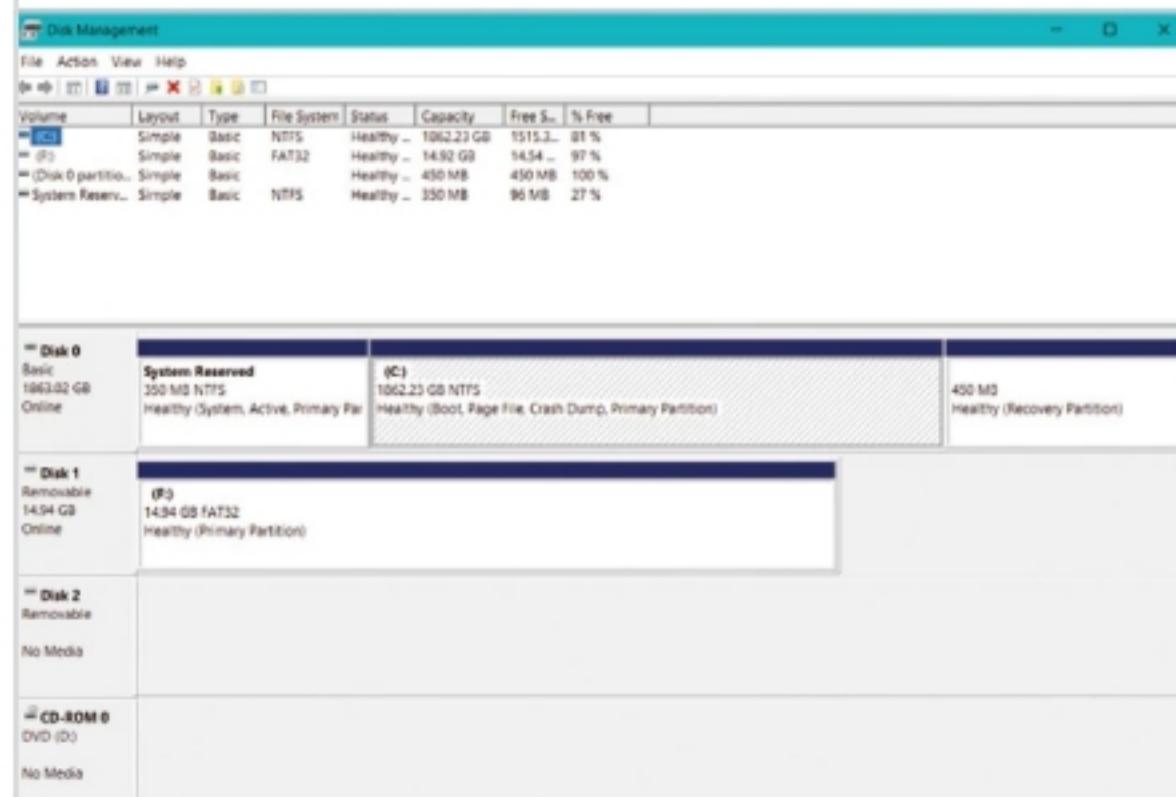
Step 4 The tool shows partitions and volumes, which are similar but different. A partition is space that's set aside on a disk separate from the other space on that disk. A volume is a partition that's been formatted with a file system. We will mainly be talking about volumes in this guide.
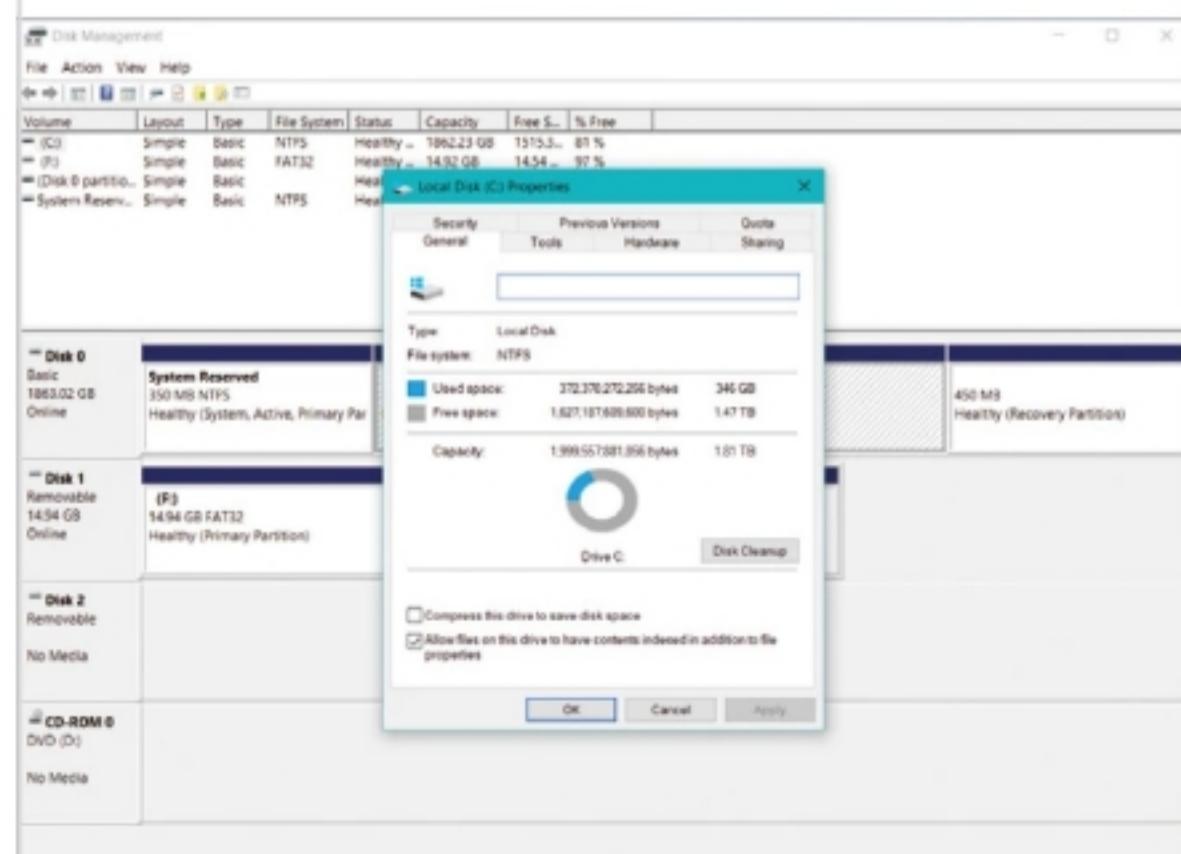
Installing New Fonts

Windows 10 now includes a new, easier way to install and manage system fonts. This is part of Microsoft's ongoing process of moving all the system options and features to the main Settings interface. It even allows you to download from the Store.

Install and Manage Fonts

To install and manage your fonts through the Settings, you will need to have the April/Spring update installed and up to date. In older versions of Windows 10, you will need to dig deeper.

Step 1 You can now find the fonts controls in Settings > Personalisation > Fonts. Here you will see a scrollable list of your current fonts, each with a visual example of how they look. This is a much more user-friendly way of viewing your fonts, letting you see exactly what each will look like when used.

Step 3 Click on any font in the list to view the available font faces and to see the font as it will display at different sizes, using the slider. You can type a word or sentence into the box at the top to see how it will look in that font. To uninstall a font, simply click the Uninstall button on the font preview screen.

Step 2 You can search for fonts using the search field at the top or just look through the alphabetical list. You can also filter the list by language. Each font is shown with the number of font faces it includes. A font face is a different version of the same font, i.e. regular, bold, italic, italic bold, etc.

Step 4 To find new fonts, click the Store link at the top of the main fonts page in the settings. The Store will open with all available fonts displayed. To install one, click on it in the Store and then click the Get button, or the Buy button if the font is not a free one. Installation is automatic, and now complete.

Blocking PUPs with Windows Defender

PUPs, Potentially Unwanted Programs, are bits of software that can sometimes be stealthily installed when you install other free software, usually by making it a default installation option with the choice to opt out.

Enable PUP blocking

PUPs can include toolbars, browser extensions, adware and other unwanted software. In almost all cases, this software should be called DUPs (Definitely Unwanted Programs).

Step 1 You can enable PUP protection with System Centre Config Manager, PowerShell or Microsoft Intune. For this guide, we'll be using the PowerShell, as this is available within Windows 10 without installing any additional software; as long as you follow the instructions carefully, it isn't as scary as it sounds.

Step 2 To access the PowerShell interface, right-click the Start button or press Windows+X and click Windows PowerShell (Admin) to open a window. Type the following command at the prompt (without the quotation marks) "Set-MpPreference -PUPProtection 1" and press Enter.

Step 3 The PUP blocker is now enabled on your PC. You will not see any new options displayed in Windows Defender but you will see "Potentially unwanted software" listed once something is blocked. If you want to disable it in the future, just run the above command again, replacing the 1 with a 0.

Step 4 PUPs are blocked when a user attempts to download or install a suspicious file or if the file meets one of these conditions: the file is being scanned from the browser, it is in a folder with "downloads" in the path; or it is in a folder with "temp" in the path. The file is placed in the quarantine section.
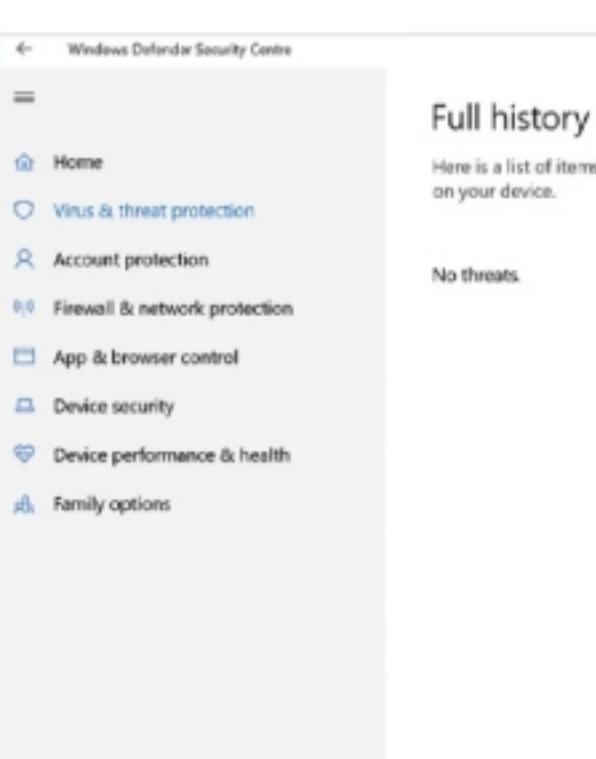
Feature 5 Public and free Wi-Fi hotspots are notorious when it comes to mobile security. Anyone with a little knowledge and some free tools via the Internet can intercept public Wi-Fi networks and hijack your connection, revealing all your data. A VPN encrypts the data and protects you.

Feature 6 If you're working abroad, or you're a remote worker, a VPN connection to the company's servers ensures that all the sensitive business data remains secure. It's difficult for a company to ensure 100 per cent security with mobile and off-site workers, but a VPN provides a secure tunnel straight to the company itself.

Feature 7 The availability of iOS and Android VPN clients means that your call data and data stored on your device is also secure. Mobile VPN apps use the same levels of protection and security, so your data can't be stolen when you're not even aware of it.

Feature 8 Most VPNs also add an extra layer of security whereby they actively block any advertising from websites. Internet ads are a necessary evil in some ways, as they provide much-needed funds for your favourite freely available websites. However, some contain malicious content and need to be blocked.

Feature 9 Using HTTPS instead of HTTP utilises the secure side of the Internet protocol. Sadly, it's not always implemented either in browsers or by users. Many VPNs force all websites to use the secure connection that a HTTPS site offers, thereby enhancing your browsing security.

Feature 10 In some countries, data retention laws are quite archaic, meaning governments and other bodies are able to access your data log for as long as you've been able to access the Internet. A good VPN won't detail any logs of your browsing and in most cases won't even hand over any personal information relating to you to other agencies.
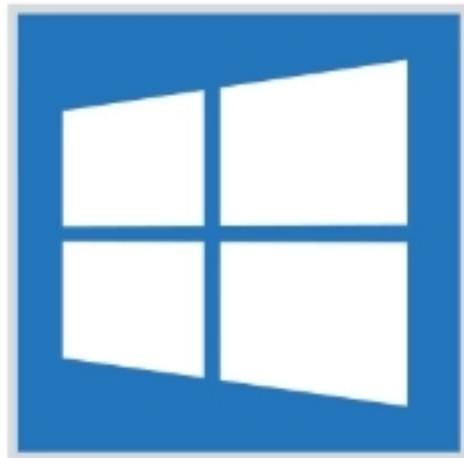
How a VPN Can Improve Windows Security

We've emphasised the enhanced privacy that a VPN offers when you're connected to its services, and the heightened levels of anonymity, but what security benefits does a VPN bring to a Windows 10 computer with an antivirus program already installed?

Security Beyond Anonymity

It's a good question: how can a VPN improve Windows security? While the privacy side is well catered for, there are some good security enhancements and features a VPN brings to the table.

Feature 1
This doesn't happen often, but an ISP can become compromised and details of user activities leaked or stolen. Using a VPN can hide your browsing activity from trackers and even your ISP, enabling you to browse without the fear of having your details leaked or accessed by others.

Feature 3
To expand the previous feature, VPNs filter web pages that are dangerous or contain threats. Even with a good antivirus client installed, you can still access a dangerous site. Using a VPN prevents the site from even being loaded.

CyberGhost has protected you from malicious content!

Feature 2
Many VPN providers utilise a level of antimalware into their security layers. This enhances your security by filtering any downloads through the VPN first. Should there be a virus present, then it can be removed or stopped at the VPN before it even reaches you.

Feature 4
The connection between you and the VPN server is encrypted to the highest possible standards. This makes it near impossible for some external element to gain access to the data you're transmitting. Online banking and shopping are extremely secure with a VPN.

Best Antivirus Software

While the built-in Windows Defender is a great antivirus and security tool, it's nowhere near as capable as one of the many third-party security suites. The likes of Bitdefender, McAfee and Symantec have years of security specialism behind their products.

Better Protection

A third-party security suite offers much more than virus scanning. With one of these, you're covered against most, if not all, digital threats. Here are four security suites worth considering if you're serious about your digital protection.

Bitdefender Bitdefender Total Security 2020 is the latest security suite from one the world's leading security specialists. This version offers unrivalled levels of protection and performance for Windows, macOS and Android platforms. There's even an advanced ransomware protection element to help protect your folders.

Symantec Norton Security Premium is the top choice for the home user from Symantec. With it you can protect up to ten PCs, Macs, smartphones or tablets and it will keep you safe when shopping online, general surfing or conducting transactions.
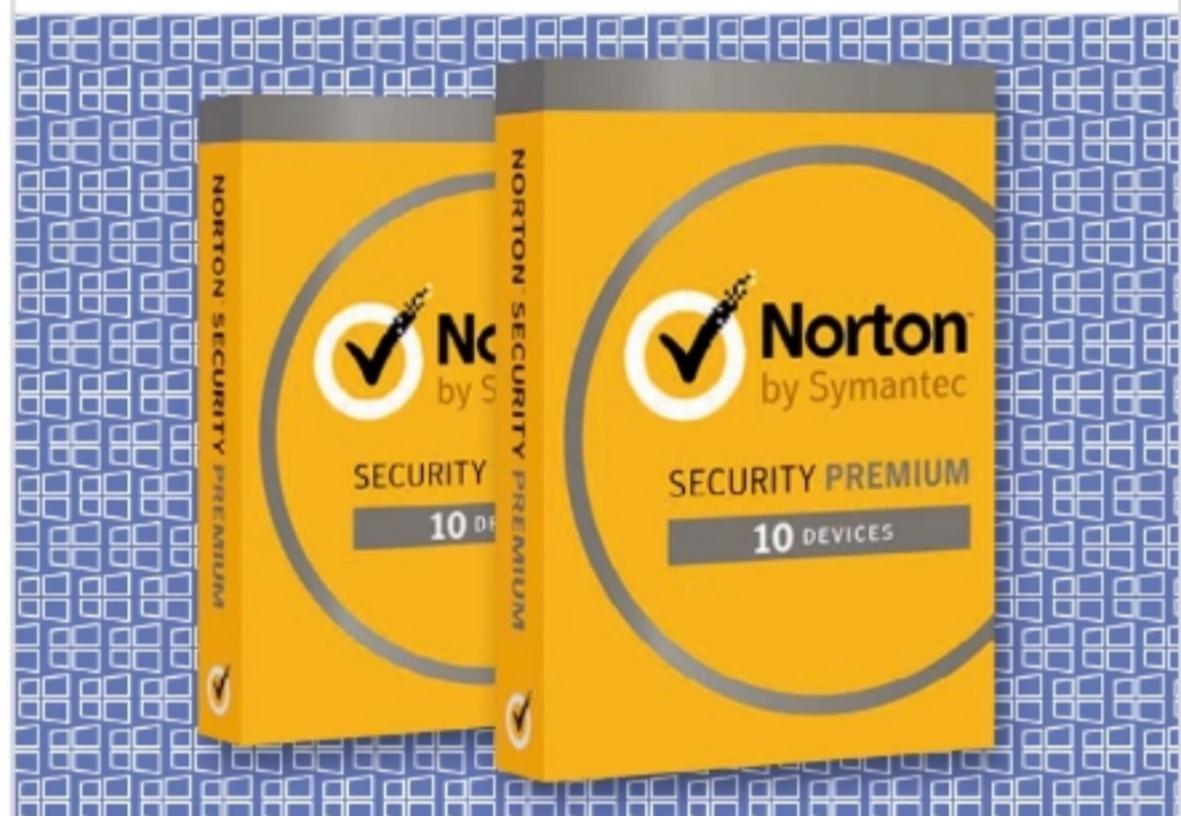
McAfee McAfee Total Protection offers a 100 per cent guarantee of virus removal, or you get your money back. There are three main versions available: Antivirus Plus, Total Protection and Livesafe; each has its own particular twist but all offer excellent security features and benefits.

Webroot Out of the three possible solutions available from Webroot, Webroot Internet Security Complete is the one for home users to consider. With it you're protected from virtually any threat, as well as getting 25GB of secure online cloud storage.
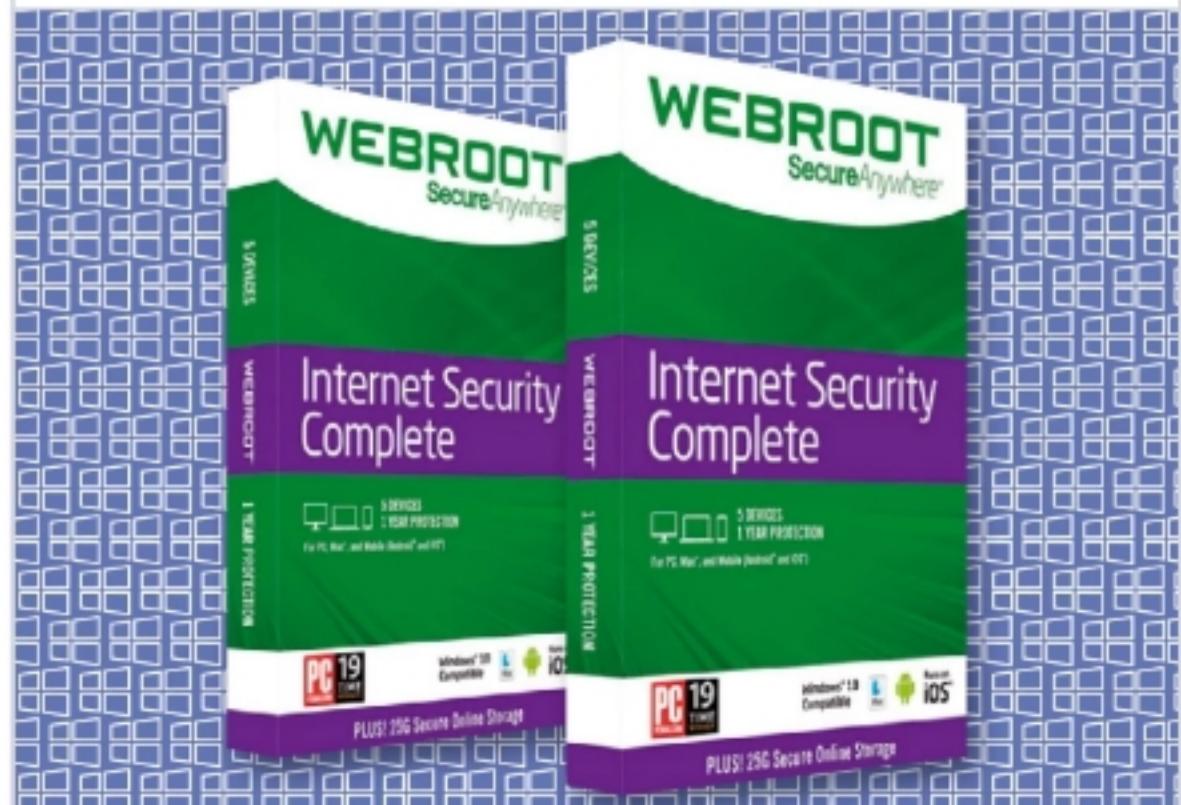
3 Use a VPN

A VPN, or Virtual Private Network, is a great way of protecting yourself and your device from hackers. They are becoming increasingly popular and therefore increasingly cheap and easy to use.

A VPN provides you with a secure, private and encrypted network to log in to, from your device. Any data sent to and from your device is then encrypted by the VPN at both ends (known as end-to-end encryption). Anyone trying to access your data would need the encryption key to decode it.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of VPN services available, for computers, smartphones and tablets. Some of these are free and others charge a small monthly fee, depending on the level of security offered. Even a basic, free VPN is better to have than no VPN at all!

Once the VPN is set up, all you need to do is log in to it from the device you want to protect before using the public Wi-Fi connection as you normally would to browse the Internet, send emails, etc.

## 4 Install and Maintain Antivirus Software

Having a good Antivirus package installed is extremely important, even if you only ever use your device in your own home and even more important if you regularly use public Wi-Fi hotspots.

Many modern antivirus packages offer browser protection, helping you to identify malicious websites before you click a single link on them. They also make it very hard for hackers to install malicious software on your device remotely, by offering improved firewalls and malware scanning.

Notably, it is not enough simply to have antivirus software installed. You also need to make sure that it is regularly updated with the latest malware definitions, so that it knows about the latest threats and is able to counter them effectively.

Some of the biggest names in Antivirus software include: Norton, McAfee, Symantec, Bitdefender and Kaspersky, all of whom offer a range of packages for home and business. You can also find very good, free software from the likes of AVG, Panda Security and Avast.

5 Use Only SSL Connections

Many of the biggest, frequently used websites, now use SSL connections (particularly since Google suggested that websites not using the HTTPS protocol would be flagged as unsafe and potentially appear lower in the search results).

As a general rule, even when not browsing through public Wi-Fi, any websites you use regularly and that require you to log in or enter your credentials, should be set to "Always use HTTPS". Most websites that ask for details about you have an HTTPS option somewhere in their account settings (if they don't already force HTTPS across the site).

This might not seem as important on a videogame forum as it does on a banking website, but hackers are aware that people use the same passwords over and over again, so seemingly "safe" websites can be a goldmine of information about you for those clever enough to realise it.

Five Ways to Make Public Wi-Fi Safer to Use

Following any one of these steps will increase your security when using public Wi-Fi. Using all of them will make your PC many, many times safer and more secure.

1 Keep Your Device Updated

Software updates, as well as providing new features, will often include security updates, so it is important to make sure all of your device software is the most recent version. This includes apps and programs, as well as OS updates. Almost all modern devices, from your laptop to the smartphones and tablets you use, make it very easy to keep things updated, often alerting you to the availability of an update or processing updates automatically.

If you have turned off automatic updating on your device (and don't want to turn it back on in the settings), make a point to regularly check for them yourself and of course apply them, as soon as possible, especially on devices that may be used to connect to public Wi-Fi.

In Windows 10, you can find update information in Settings > Update & Security > Windows Update. If updates are available to download, they will be displayed here (along with any previous failed updates, etc.).
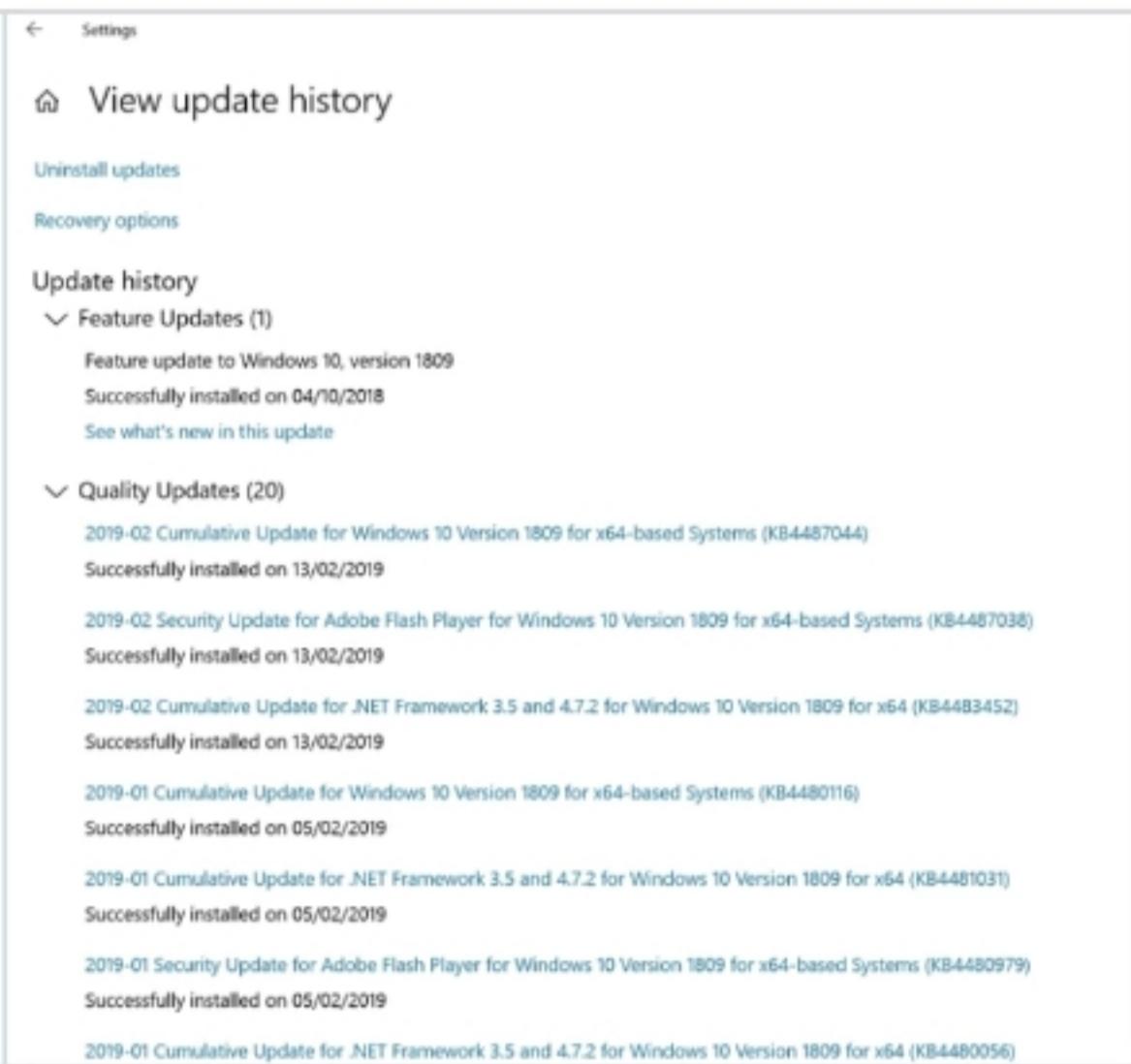
2 Turn Off Sharing

Your PCs, phones and tablets are designed to interact easily with other devices you own, using a system known as Sharing. Sharing, as the name suggests, allows data or files to be shared or accessed from devices on the same network. This is normally perfectly fine when all of your devices are connected to your home network, but not so fine when you are connected to a public Wi-Fi hotspot.

When using your devices online in public, you should always turn Sharing off. This can be done in System Preferences (on a Mac), in Network and Sharing (on a Windows PC). In Windows, you can also just select "Public" when asked about a new network connection.

Many mobile devices also allow you to turn off Network Discovery or Device Visibility, meaning it is hidden from other devices connected to the same network. You can normally find this option in the Connections or Wi-Fi settings.
In Windows 10, you can find further sharing options in Settings > System > Shared Experiences.
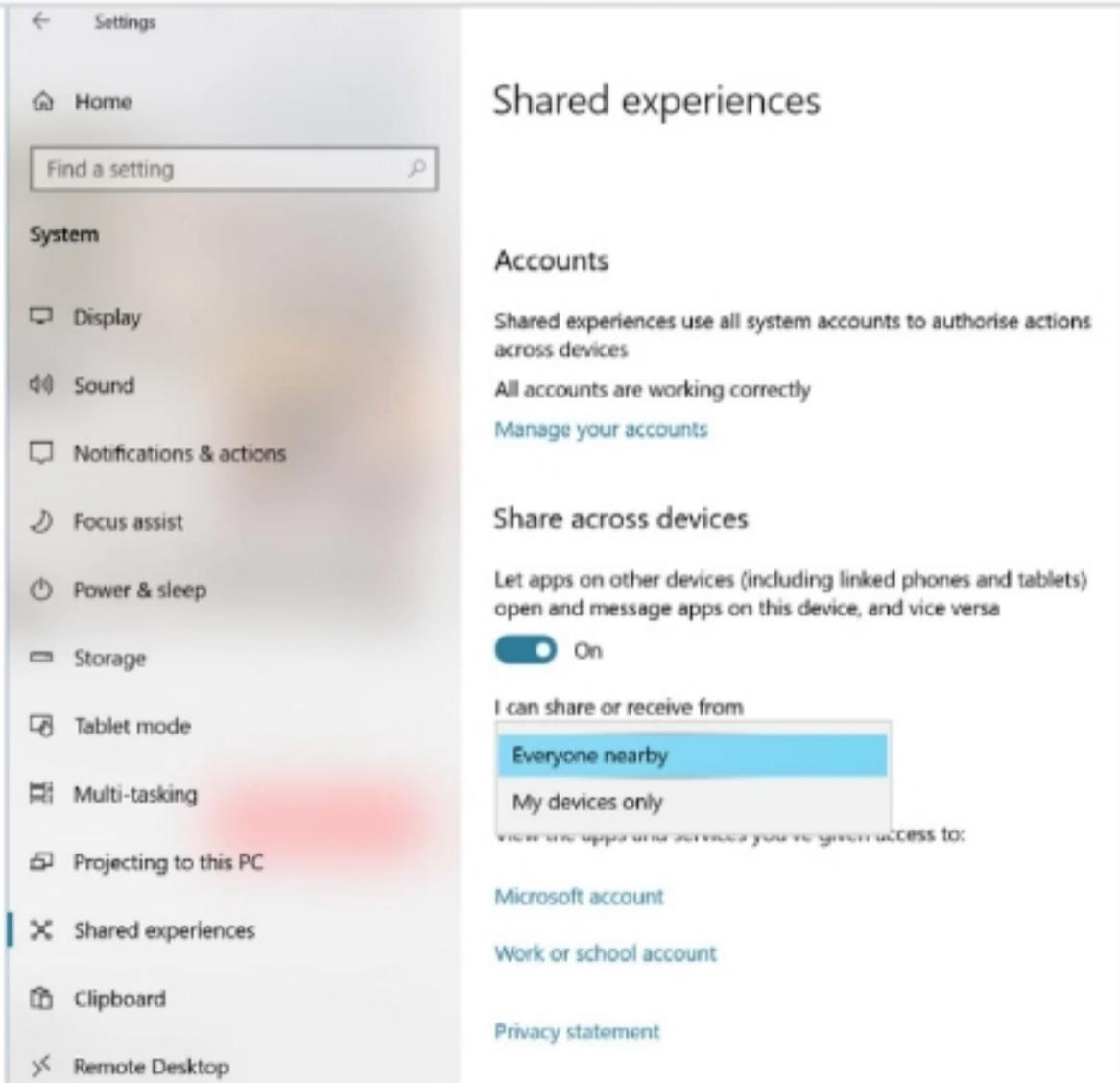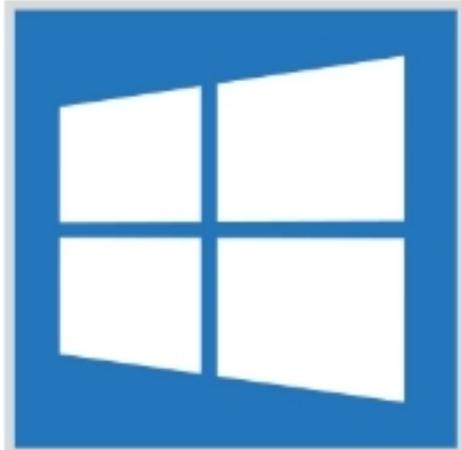
Protect Devices on Public Wi-Fi

There are few places where you can't now find a wireless connection for your laptop. And while this is great for those of us that want to stay connected day and night, accessing Wi-Fi in a public place does bring with it some dangers not found on your home network.

What Makes Public Wi-Fi Unsafe?

The very same features that make publicly accessible Wi-Fi hotspots desirable for you and us, such as the lack of authentication needed to connect, also makes them desirable for hackers.

Let us start by saying that not all public Wi-Fi is equally unsafe. A coffee shop that has a new Wi-Fi password chalked up on the board every day is probably safer to use than one where the password has been the same for five years, but not by much. As a rule of thumb, you should assume that any network connection you do not control will have fewer defences against interception and should be treated as unsafe.

Hackers are able to insert themselves (virtually) between your device and the network connection point, so all of the information sent to and from the network passes through the hacker, who then passes it on. As this information passes, it can be collected without you even knowing it has passed through a third party device.

Even if a hacker doesn't want to farm your data directly, if you allow file-sharing across a network then public Wi-Fi connections can be used to distribute malware. This malware could hide itself on your device and cause all sorts of problems, from logging keystrokes to sending spam emails to contacts as if they are from you.

As the use of public Wi-Fi increases, you can expect the number of different ways hackers can find to attack those using it to increase, as well. That doesn't mean you need to stop using Wi-Fi Hotspots, you just need to ensure that you are not the easy target most hackers are looking for.

If you want to stay connected, but also want to keep yourself and your device safe, there are a few simple things you can do to tighten up security without compromising your Internet access.

Pause or Disable OneDrive

If you use OneDrive to backup images etc., pausing it while you are tethering can help to reduce data use. If you never use OneDrive, you can even completely disable it.

Step 1 Stopping OneDrive just for the duration of your tethering is easy. Click the Hidden Icons arrow in the taskbar, bottom right of the screen, and right-click on the OneDrive icon (the cloud). From the Action menu, either click on Pause Syncing" (you can choose a duration) or click Exit.

Step 3 Press the Windows key + R to open the Run box. Type `gpedit.msc` and click OK. In the Local Group Policy Editor, in the folder list under Local Computer Policy, navigate the folders to Local Computer Policy > Computer Configuration > Administrative Templates > Windows Components > OneDrive.
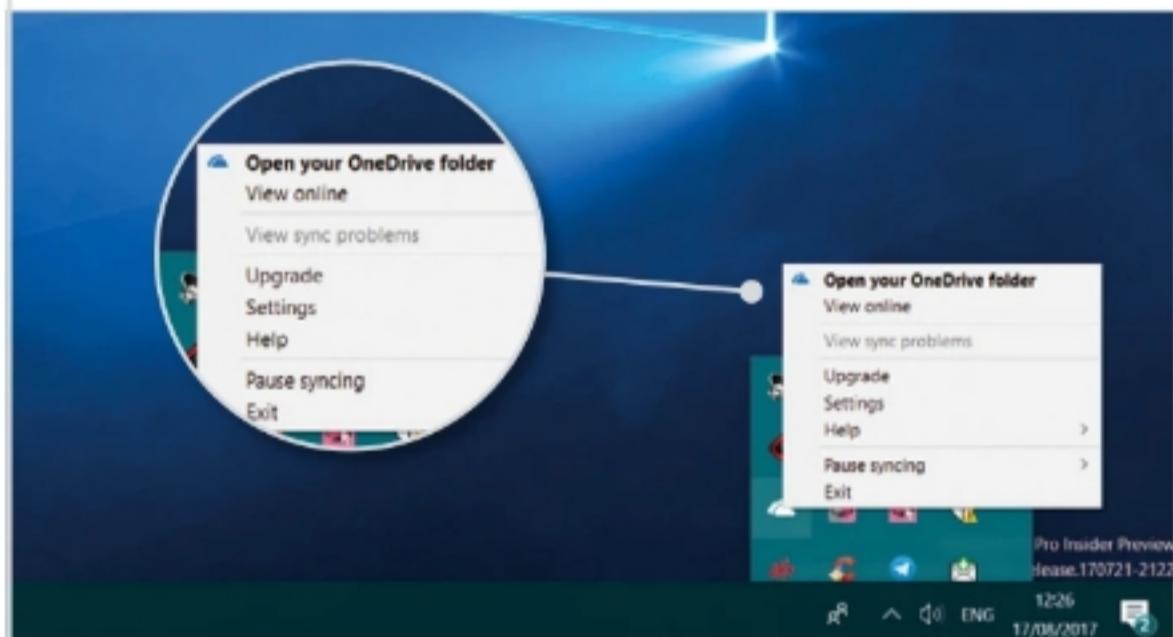
Step 2 OneDrive in Windows 10 can be disabled through your computer's Local Group Policy Editor. This doesn't remove OneDrive from your PC but it stops it from syncing with the cloud or connecting with other apps, and removes it from the navigation pane in File Explorer.

Step 4 On the OneDrive screen, under Settings, click Prevent the usage of OneDrive for file storage. In the Prevent the usage of OneDrive for file storage box, select Enabled, then click OK. Be aware that disabling OneDrive like this will disable it for all users of the PC, not just you.
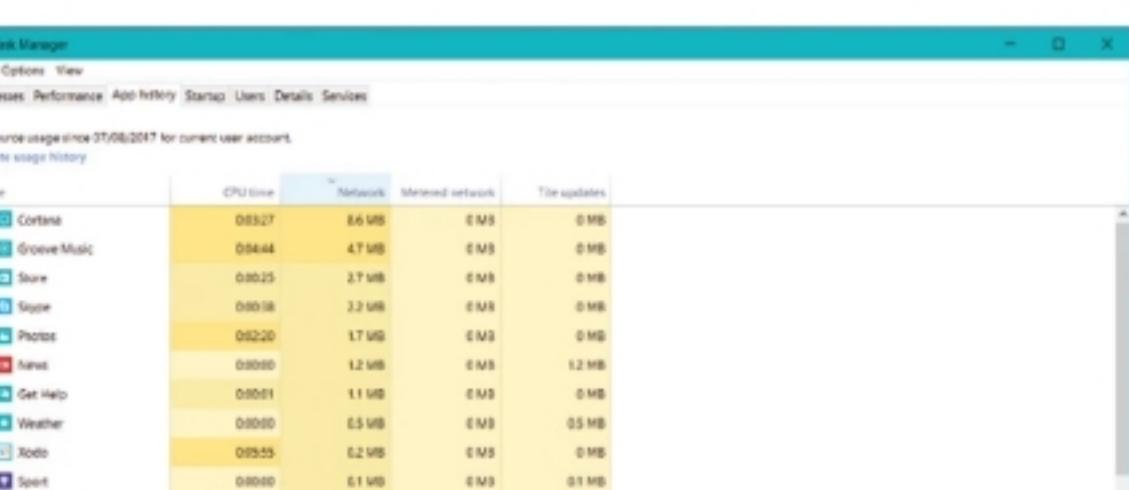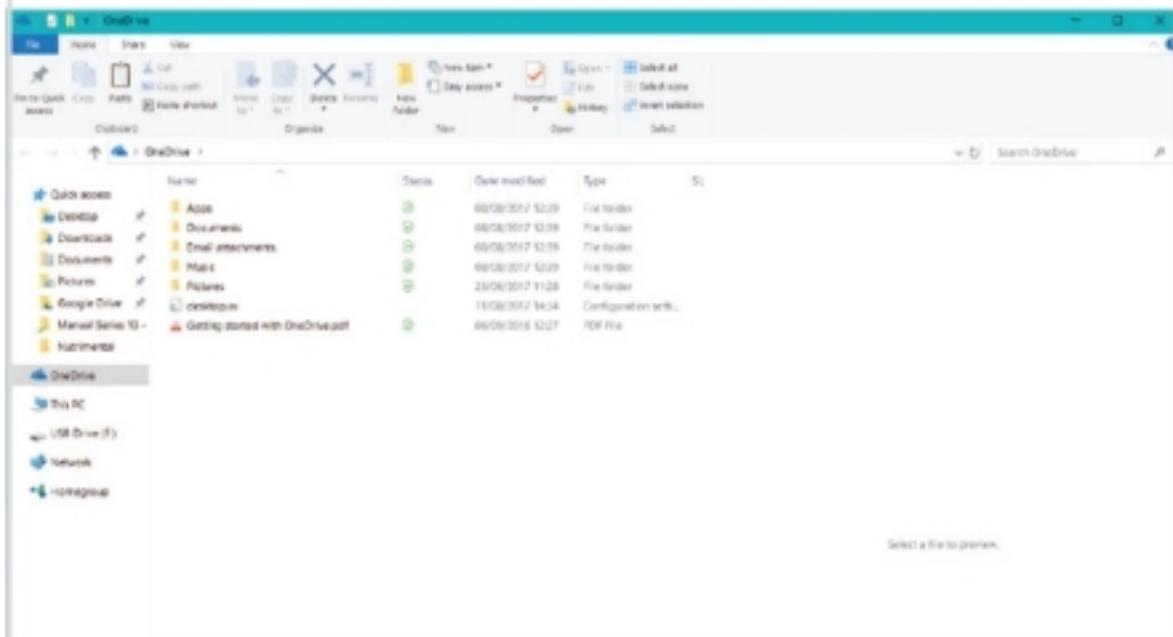
CHECK TASK MANAGER

The Task Manager is a great tool for checking to see which apps or services are using a lot of data at any time. To open the Task Manager, press Ctrl+Shift+Esc or search for it in the Start menu search field. Click at the top of the Network tab to display high usage services at the top.
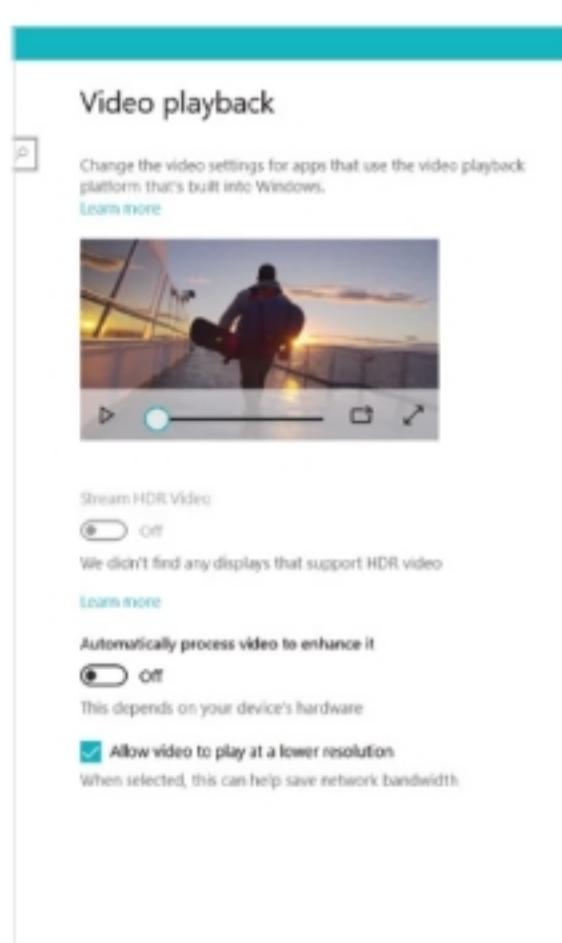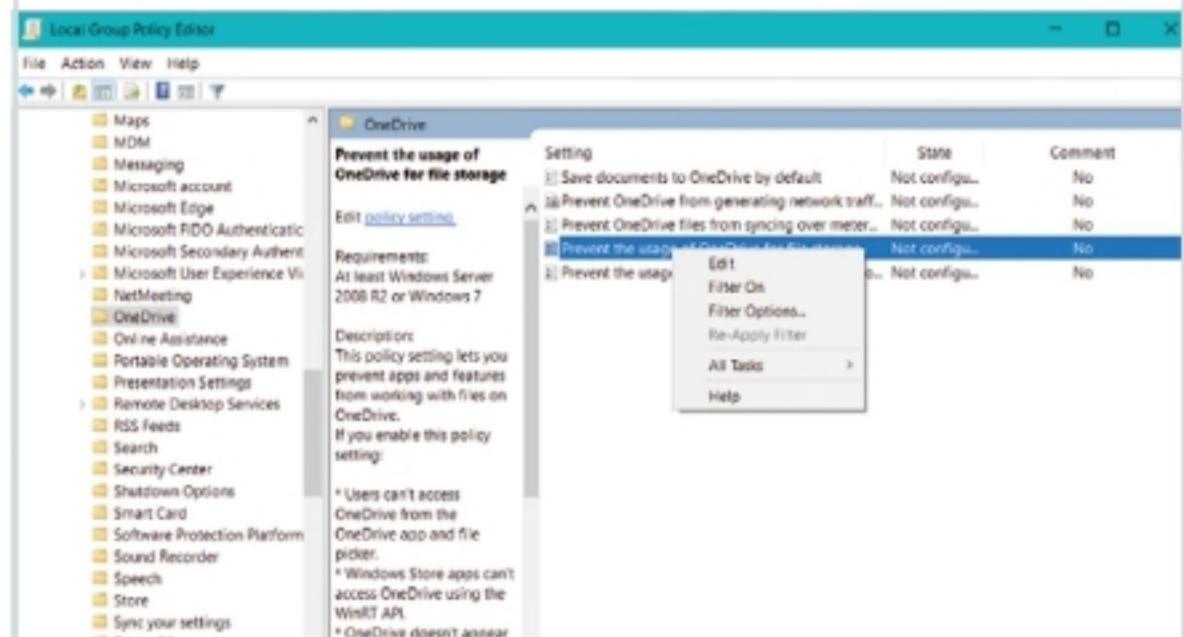
REDUCE STREAMING VIDEO QUALITY

Streaming or downloading videos is a surefire way to burn through your data quickly and is best avoided when tethering. However, if you need to view video over a tethered connection, you can tell Windows to reduce quality in Settings > Apps > Video Playback. Click 'Allow video to play at low res'.
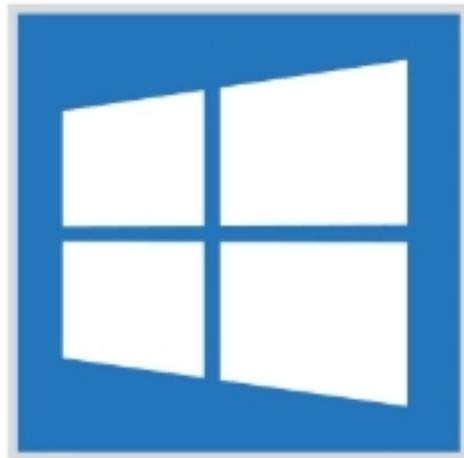
Limiting Data Usage when Tethering

Tethering means connecting your phone to the mobile data network and then connecting a second device via Wi-Fi to the phone to make use of that connection. Windows 10 can be data-heavy; a problem if your phone has limited mobile data allowance.

Set Your Tethered Connection to Metered

Windows 10 can be quite data-heavy, as mentioned, especially if an update happens to become available when tethered. Luckily, you can tell Windows to automatically limit data use.

Step 1 Cellular data connections are set as metered by default. Wi-Fi and Ethernet network connections can be set to metered but aren't by default. Some apps might work differently on a metered connection to help reduce your data usage. Some updates for Windows won't be installed automatically either.

Devices
Bluetooth, printers, mouse

Network & Internet
WiFi, flight mode, VPN

Personalisation
Background, lock screen, colours

Time & language
Speech, region, date

Gaming
Game bar, DVR, broadcasting, Game Mode

Ease of Access
Narrator, magnifier, high contrast

Step 2 To set a Wi-Fi network connection as metered, click Start > Settings > Network & Internet > Wi-Fi > Manage known networks. Select the Wi-Fi network > Properties > turn on Set as metered connection. Unfortunately, many Windows apps completely ignore the metered connection setting.

TP-LINK_AP_4C1A

Make this PC discoverable

Allow your PC to be discoverable by other PCs and devices on this network. We recommend turning this on for private networks at home or work, but turning it off for public networks to help keep your stuff safe.

Off

Metered connection

If you have a limited data plan and want more control over data usage, make this connection a metered network. Some apps might work differently to reduce data usage when you're connected to this network.

Set as metered connection

Off

Properties

CHECK NETWORK USAGE DETAILS

You can also view a log of how much data applications on your PC have used in the last 30 days. This can help you identify applications that might be using data in the background. To check this, head to Settings > Network & Internet > Data usage and click the graph to see more details.

MANAGE BROWSING DATA

You should now have reduced background data use, including updates and cloud syncing, so data use will be in the apps you use; for example, Google Chrome. You can install a handy extension for Chrome which limits data. Go to www.chrome. google.com/webstore/ and search for Data Saver.

Step 5   Powerline adapters are an excellent resource for connecting wired network devices, without trailing lengths of cable around the home. However, depending on the adapter, it is possible to use another adapter to gain access to yours. In newer homes it's an easy enough task to pick up another user's network, so use the Encryption button if the adapter has one.

Step 6   Networking a home with Ethernet cables isn't a difficult project and it offers faster connection speeds than that of wireless. However, if you're living in shared accommodation or a block of flats, make sure that any unseen cable lengths can't be accessed by a neighbour. It's easy enough to splice into an Ethernet cable and steal bandwidth.

Step 7   Consider using a network mapping program, such as Open-AudIT, to gain a better understanding of what devices are attached to your network. Become familiar with the addresses, manufacturer, model IDs and so on of every connected object. That way, should anything new appear, you'll know it's not something you allowed.

Step 8   Sharing resources and files from one computer to another is perfectly fine but consider sharing less if you live in close proximity to others. Once a hacker has gained access to your network, getting to any shared folders you have will be a doddle. In extreme cases don't share anything, but generally tighten password control.
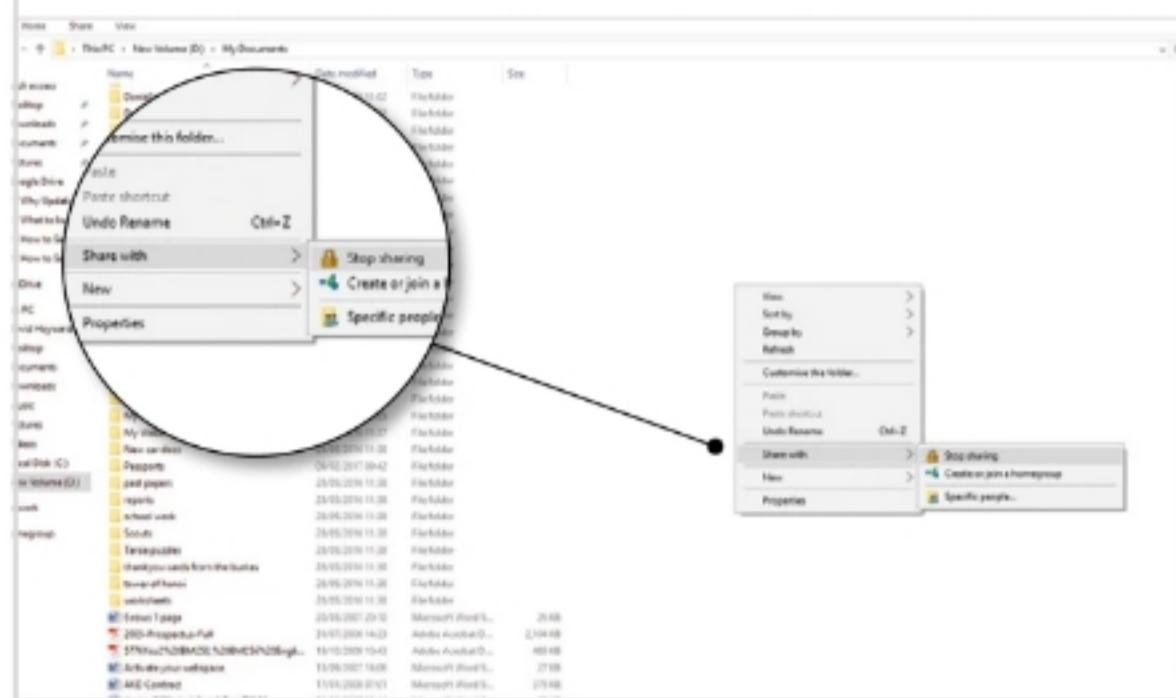
Step 9   Remote administration on both the router and computer certainly can help you out when you're not at the keyboard. Perhaps you connect to your home network from work? Whatever the reasons, it does leave a potential gap in your home network security. Consider closing it completely or double-checking the authentication is top notch.

Step 10   If you run a small office make sure that all your wall ports are located in areas where they are secure. Behind desks and generally away from where the public or any visitors may be able sneakily plug a laptop in.
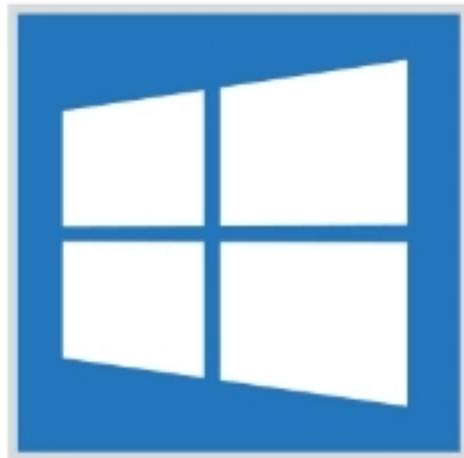
Secure Your Home Network

We've mentioned previously that an attack doesn't always come from the other side of the globe but can indeed be a little too close to home at times. Home network hacking is possible with the simplest of tools; easily found on the Internet.

Network Protection

Without being too paranoid, it's remarkably easy to get into a neighbour's home network. If you live in a block of flats or you use powerline adapters, you may need to consider these ten steps for better network protection.

Step 1 The most common entry point to gain access to your network is via the router. The router from your ISP may well be offering the latest forms of encryption but it doesn't take a genius to trawl the less reputable sections of the Internet to obtain a list of passwords. Therefore, change the default username and password needed to access it.
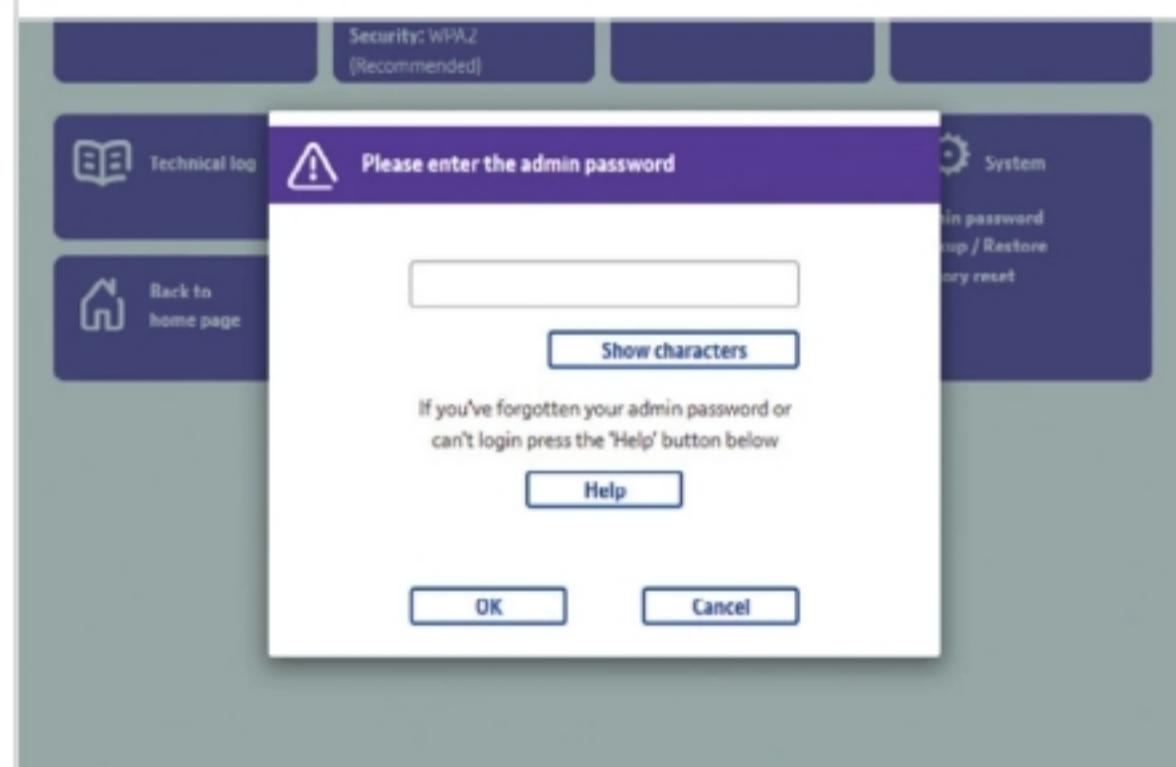
Step 2 Most routers these days come with a form of authentication called MAC (Media Access Code) address filtering. Every networkable device, computers, tablets, games consoles, come with a unique MAC address. The filtering allows you to enter the MAC addresses of your devices, so only they can be used on your router. Consult your router documentation for more details.
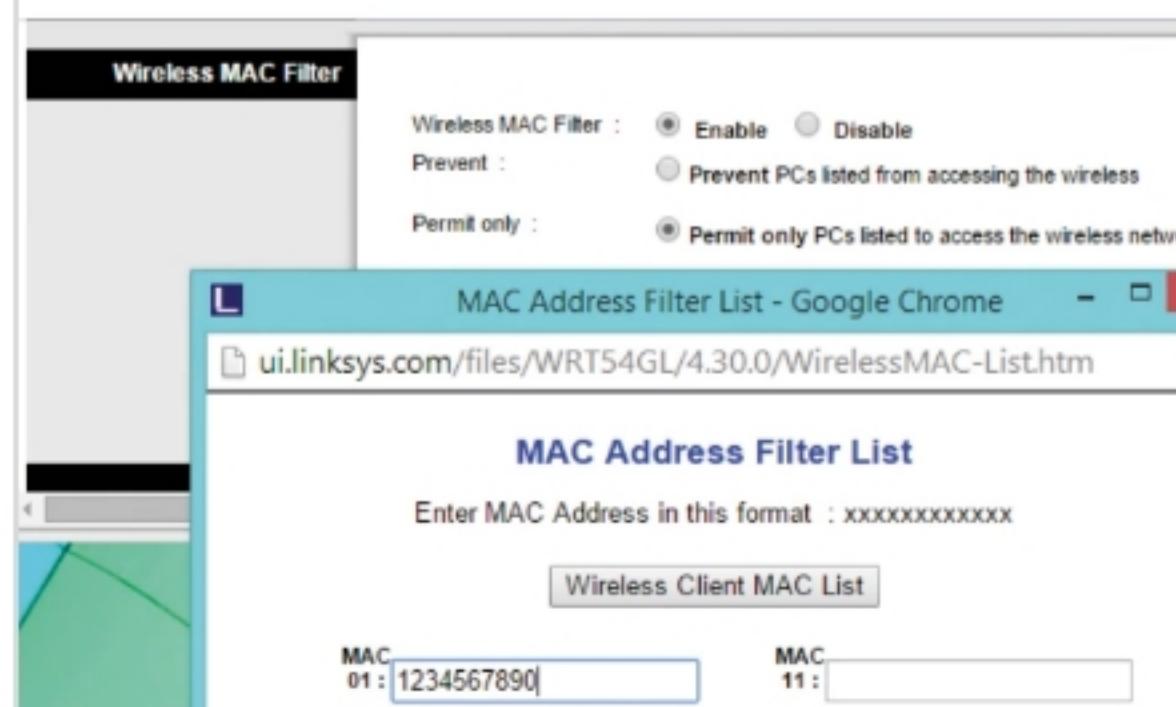
Step 3 It can be a pain but try disabling DHCP on your router and opting for static IP addresses. Every device that connects to a DHCP router will receive an IP address. By eliminating that you get to specify the address range available. It's not fool proof but it's worth considering.
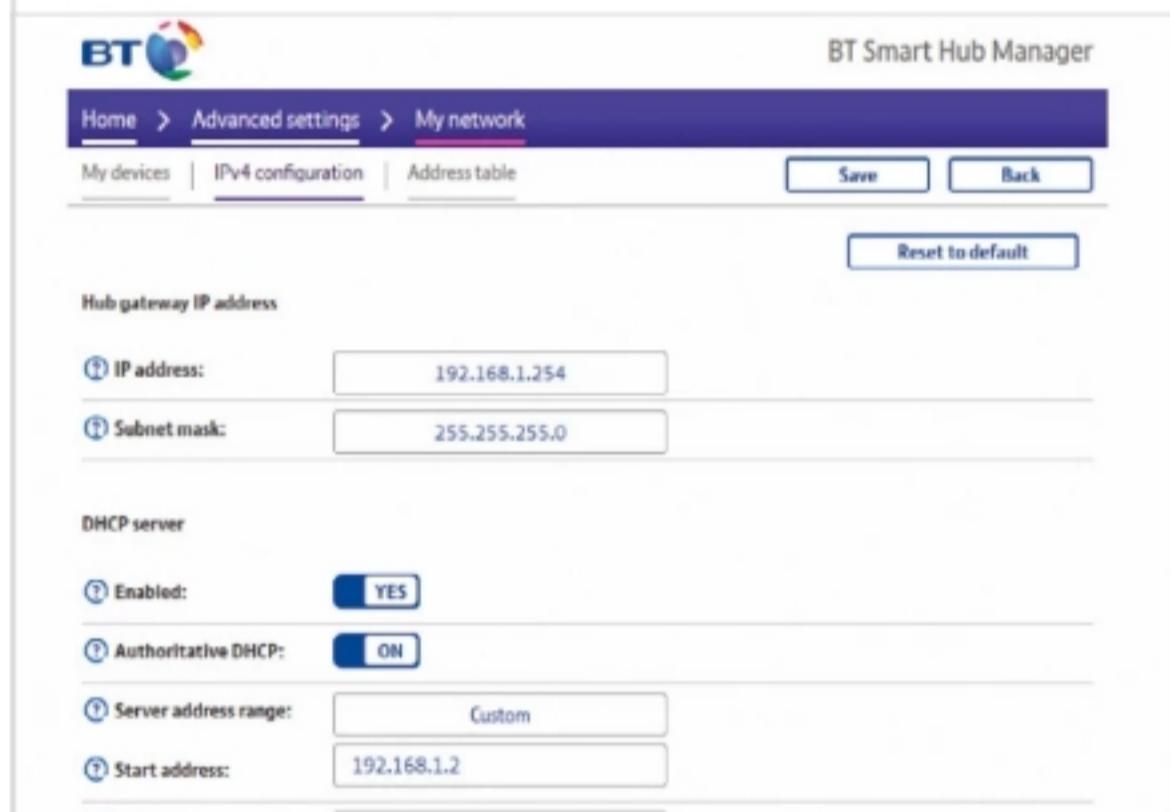
Step 4 According to Trustwave's 2013 Global Security Report, many home network hacks are conducted when the household is away or asleep. This leaves the hacker with ample opportunity to steal bandwidth and view files you may have on a NAS drive. The short, simple solution is to power off the router at night or if you go out for the day.

Scanning for malware... 28%

SVC: amdxata > C:\Wh.2\drivers\amdxata.sys

STOP SCAN
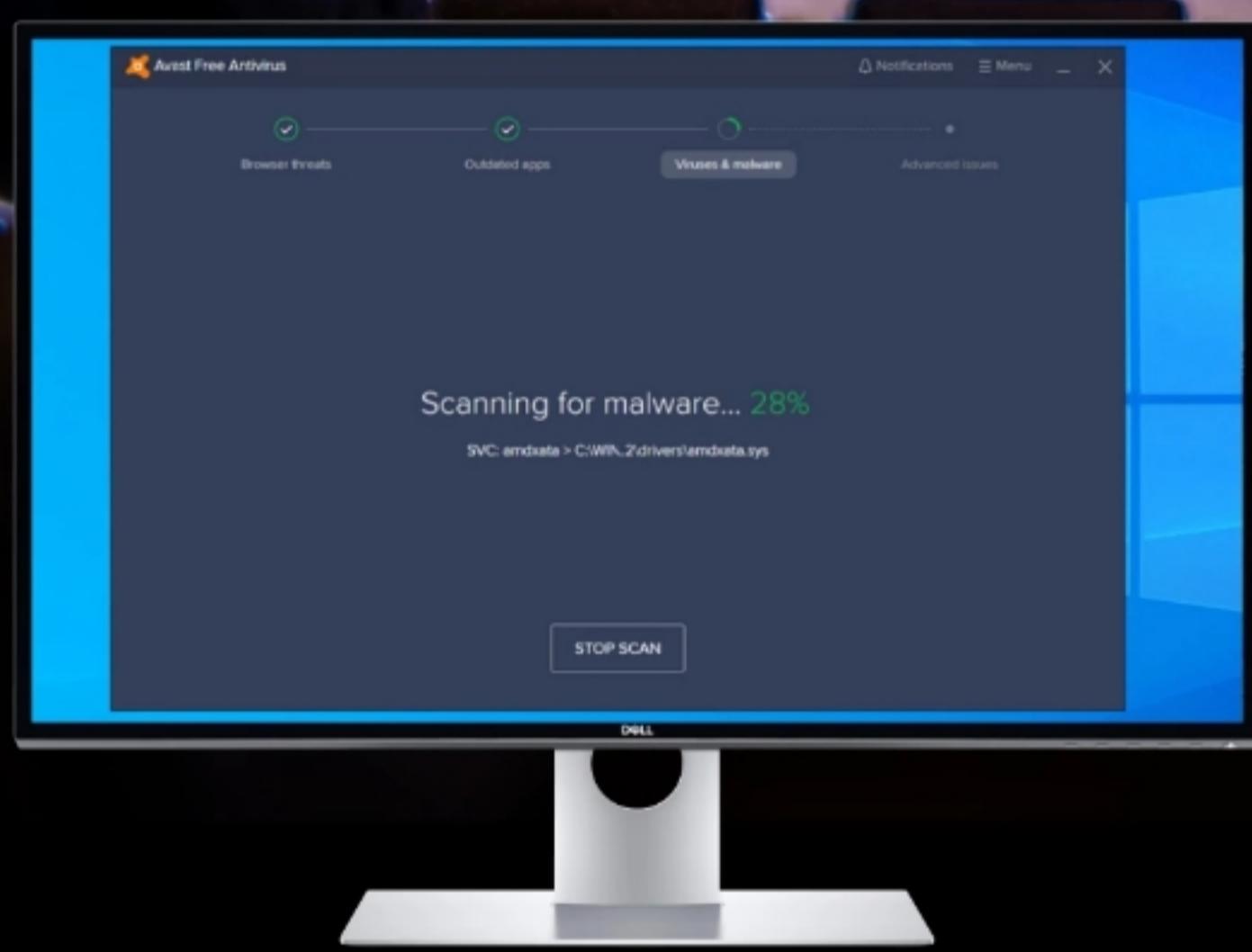
SCAN FOR VIRUSES/MALWARE

If your computer has been infected with a virus or malware, this could be where the hacker got your details, so none of the steps above are any use if the underlying source of the breach is still sitting on your device waiting to send all of your updated information to the hacker. Run a complete virus scan, using reputable scanning software from the likes of Norton, Kaspersky, Panda or McAfee.

If using Windows 10, then the Windows Defender tool offers an Offline Scan, which can find even particularly well-hidden malware on your computer. This scan will take at least 15 minutes to complete, but is the most in-depth scan offered by the free anti-virus software.

CONTACT FRIENDS, FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES

If you think that your email or social media account has been hacked, contact friends, family and colleagues top let them know. There have been many cases where a family member or friend has received an email supposedly from a stranded person, asking for help (in the form of money) so that they can get home. Making people aware, means they will be less likely to fall for this sort of scam.

EXAMINE ALL YOUR ACCOUNTS CAREFULLY

This includes banking, email, online shopping accounts, especially if you use the same password for multiple logins. Check your email inbox and sent mail box for things you haven't signed up to or sent. Think about how you recover a forgotten password on almost any website: You request a password reset to your email address. If someone has got hold of access to your emails, they could do the same.

Look for any unusual activity at all, and if you spot some, contact the website or company to let them know your account may have been breached. Often, they can help you sort it out the fastest way.

If your email account has been taken over, and the password changed, you will need a way to prove that you are the rightful owner. This is why it is important to have two separate email addresses, as you can usually use a second email address as the alternate contact for the main address.

CHECK YOUR BANK AND CREDIT CARD STATEMENTS

Check both your bank account and credit card statement for any unusual activity (online and immediately if possible, but if not contact your bank/credit card company and ask for a statement). It is also worth informing both your bank and credit card company what has happened, so that they can be aware and alert for any unusual activity in the near future.

Having to get new cards issued may be a hassle, but it is less hassle than trying to sort out the mess left when a hacker starts buying things using your card details.

RECOVER YOUR ACCOUNTS

Major companies such as Google, Facebook, Twitter and Microsoft are well aware of the possibility of accounts being hacked, and most offer processes to get the account back to normal. Indeed, the company may well be the first to realise an account has been hijacked and shut it down for you. Head over to the homepage of the website in question and check the knowledge base/help desk for advice on what to do next.

Just remember that if you get an email from Facebook, Twitter, etc., telling you that your account has been breached, make sure that it is legitimate and not someone phishing for your login information. You can read more about spotting scam emails at https://bdmpublications.com.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

You may hear about a big data breach in the news, or from friends and colleagues, and if the company hacked is one you have accounts with, it is worth following all of the steps below just in case. Often, the first you will know about being hacked is a call from your credit card company or bank about unusual activity, or from friends/relatives suddenly receiving strange requests for money from you.

Many of the large email providers, such as Gmail, will alert you if there is a new login to your account from an unrecognised location or device. Or you may simply find that you have been logged out of an account and your password is no longer working.

The most important thing is not how you discover how you have been hacked, although we urge you to keep a close eye on all your online activity, but how you act immediately after you find out.

You can check if your email address has potentially been involved in a data breach by entering it in to the Have I Been Pwned website.
https://haveibeenpwned.com/

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Even if you think only one account has been targeted, you should still move to protect ALL of your important accounts. This is especially true if you main email account has been breached, or if you use the same email and password for all of your online accounts.

CHANGE YOUR PASSWORDS

The very first thing you need to do is change all of your passwords, especially for your email account, banking accounts, credit card accounts, PayPal, etc. Many online accounts now offer 2-step verification, which adds an extra layer of security by sending you a passcode each time you try to log in. If this is available, set it up as soon as possible.

If your email account password has been changed by the hacker, you will need to contact the provider and prove you are the rightful owner of that account. For Gmail, there are instructions for recovering a hacked account on the Google support pages (https://support.google.com). The other main email providers should offer similar advice.
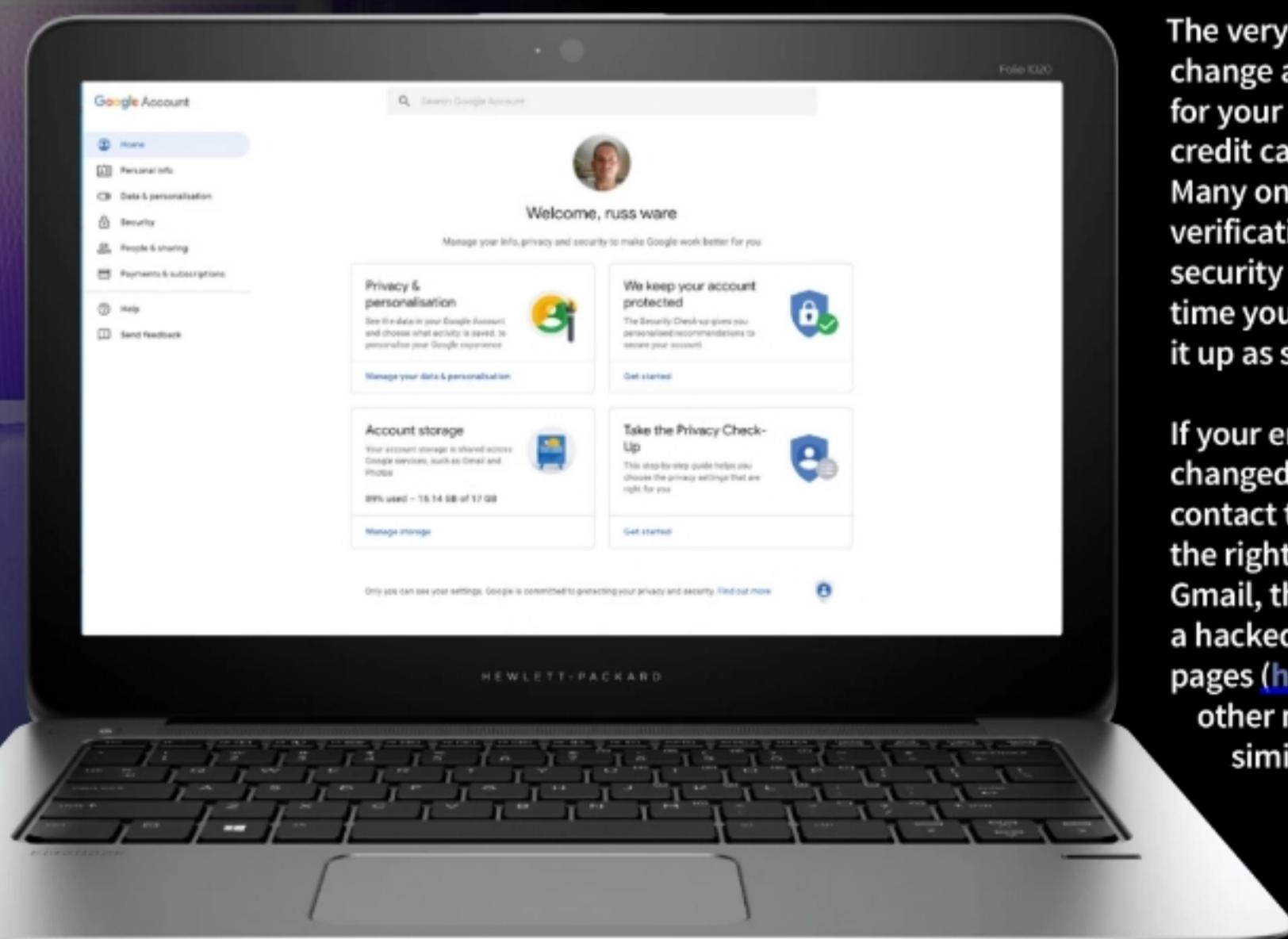
WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE HACKED

There are literally hundreds of millions of email addresses and account details stolen by hackers each year, sometimes in a single massive breach, such as the Equifax attack from a few years ago, but sometimes directly from your own computer. Being the victim of a hack sounds scary to most people, but while you should take it seriously, there is often no need to panic. If you think you have been hacked, just follow the instructions here to get your online life back on track.

WINDOWS DEFENDER DASHBOARD

The dashboard is the main screen of Windows Defender and opens when you click the "Defender shield" icon in the taskbar. It lets you check the security of your computer at a glance, but doesn't really give you much information beyond whether an action is needed or not needed within the various security sections.

Ideally, you want to see a green tick on each section of the dashboard.

If you see a warning symbol, there are suggested actions that you should take a look at, while a red X means something needs your immediate attention.

Firewall & network protection
Private firewall is off. Your device may be vulnerable.

Turn on

App & browser control
No action needed.

Device security
View status and manage hardware security features
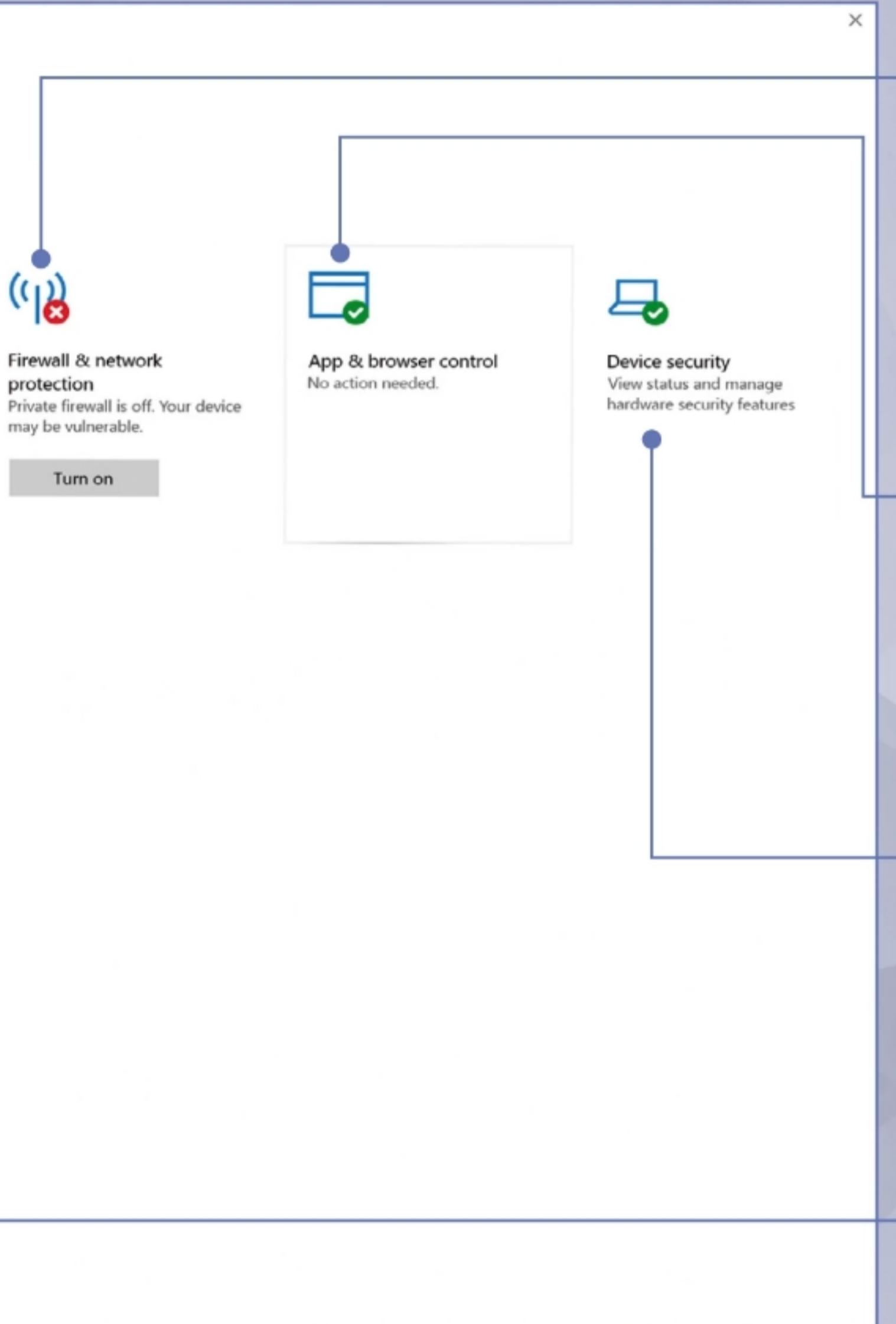
Firewall & Network Protection

Windows Defender includes three firewalls, for: Domain network, Private network and Public network. You can turn each of these firewalls on or off at will, although you will normally only be connected to one type of network at a time (if you are at home, usually a Private network).

Apps & Browser Control

This section contains the settings for Windows Defender SmartScreen. This helps to protect your Windows 10 device from potentially dangerous apps, files, websites and downloads. It also includes a link to download Application Guard and lets you control Exploit protection.

Device Security

Despite the title, this isn't really a hub for device security. You can learn more about Core isolation (virtualisation-based security) and enable the memory-integrity feature, helping to prevent malicious attacks to core, high-security processes. Note: The exact options here can vary depending on device.

Family Options

The Family options feature in Windows Security provides you with easy access to tools for managing your children's digital life. Use Family options to help keep your children's devices clean and up to date with the latest version of Windows 10 as well as protecting your kids when they're online.

Using the Windows Defender Tools

Microsoft Edge lets you move quickly from browsing to actions. Write or type notes directly on web pages and share them with others, read online articles free of distraction and save your favourite reads for convenient access later.

Virus & Threat Protection

This is where to check and scan for viruses and other threats to your Windows 10 security. Here you will find tools for preventing viruses and other malware from ever taking hold of your computer, as well as the tools needed to check for anything which already got through your defences.

Account Protection

This is where you manage account and sign-in security for Windows 10. This includes the Microsoft account you are signed in to (or the option to sign in to one), Windows Hello and Dynamic lock. Clicking on any of the options here will simply take you to the relevant area of the main settings.

Device Performance & Health

Displays issues with the health and performance of your computer, including the status of the Storage capacity, Apps and software and the Windows Time service. This is also where you come if you want to begin the process of performing a Fresh Start on your computer.

Windows Security

- Home
- Virus & threat protection
- Account protection
- Firewall & network protection
- App & browser control
- Device security
- Device performance & health
- Family options

Security at a glance

See what's happening with the security and health of your device and take any actions needed.

Virus & threat protection
No action needed.

Account protection
No action needed.

Device performance & health
No action needed.

Family options
Manage how your family uses their devices.

Settings

Maintain and Protect Windows 10

Take your knowledge of Windows 10 to the next level, with guides to maintaining privacy, security and even your internal memory and hardware. Learn how to speed up your PC and how to make it run more smoothly, or diagnose common Windows problems.

Contents

External Storage for a Smartphone or Tablet

Many, if not all, modern smartphones and tablets support USB OTG (On-The-Go), meaning you can use an old USB flash drive as external storage for your mobile files and photos.

You will need a mobile device that supports USB OTG (the alternative is to root your non-OTG device so you can install an app which allows you to mount external drives; probably more trouble than it's worth). You will also need a short USB OTG cable unless your flash drive has a micro USB/USB C plug on it.

Use it as a Portable Password Manager

As our world gets more and more digital, password manager software has become more and more popular as we rack up double-digit (or even triple-digit) password collections.

Many of the most popular password managers, including LastPass, allow you to download a portable version of the software, along with a web browser, so it can be used from a USB stick.

Create a Windows 10 Recovery Drive

The easiest way to be able to get your computer up and running after a significant hardware failure is to create and regularly update a recovery drive. Windows 10 includes all of the tools you need to create a recovery drive, which does not protect personal files and applications but will allow you to quickly reinstall Windows 10 in the state it was when the drive was created.

You will need a USB drive that doesn't contain any other data (as everything will be erased during the creation process), and one that has a capacity of at least 16GB.

To create a recovery drive, search in Windows 10 for "Create a recovery drive" and select the matching result that appears. Make sure that "Back up system files to the recovery drive" is selected, then connect the drive to your PC and click create.

Automatically Sync Files to USB

There are lots of cloud storage solutions which allow automatic syncing, but it is also possible to automatically sync files locally, giving you a portable backup that will be accessible even when cloud storage isn't.

Tools like Microsoft's SyncToy and others allow you to create a folder that is automatically synced with an external drive, including a USB flash drive. Every time you plug in the connected USB drive, files from that folder will be synced/copied onto the drive, and anything new on the drive will be copied into the local folder.

Store Your Most Sensitive Data

If you have sensitive data that you need to keep safe, in an offline location, you can encrypt and use an old USB flash drive.

Again, the size of the old drive needed will depend on how much data you need to store. If it is just documents and a few images, then even an 8GB drive should give you plenty of space.

To encrypt your drive, you will need some software such as TrueCrypt, SecurStick or VeraCrypt. Download your chosen encryption software and carefully follow the instructions to create the encrypted drive. In all cases you will need to create an access password for the drive, so make sure you don't forget it (write it down and store it separately to the USB drive) as it is the only way to recover the data on that drive!
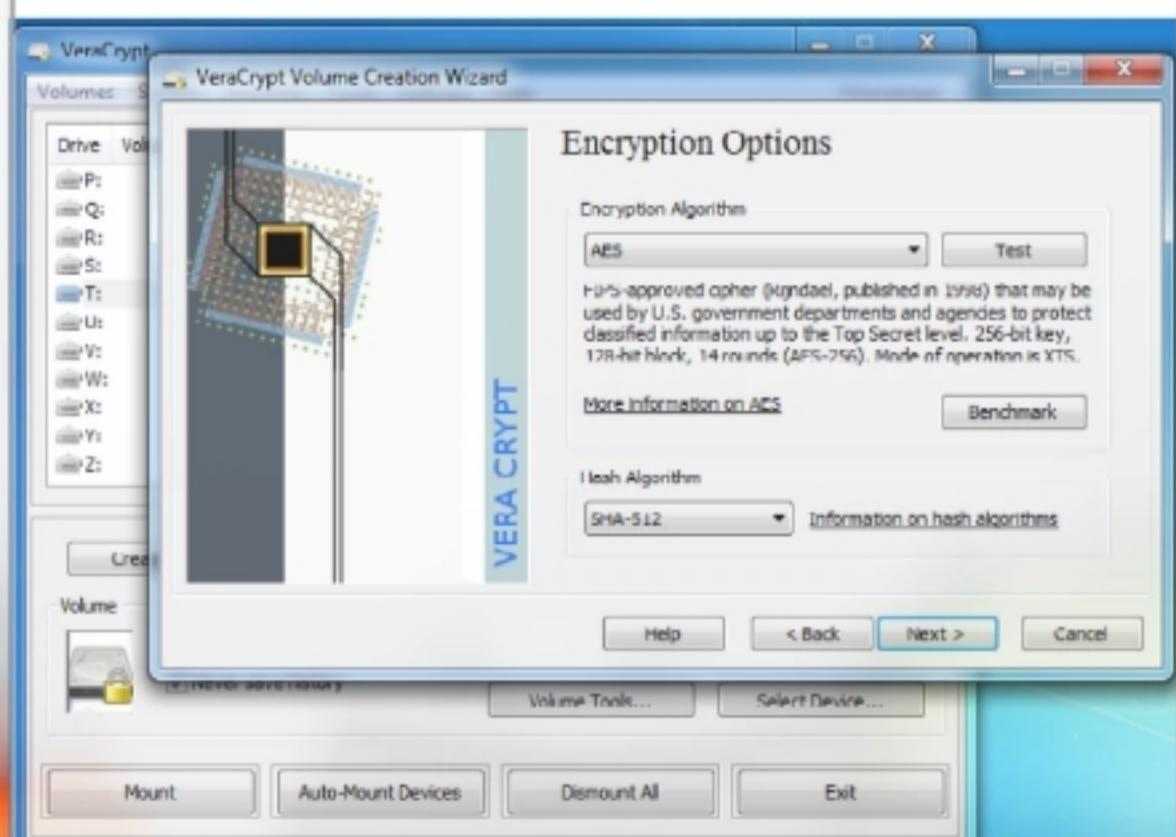
Boost PC Performance with ReadyBoost

Back in the days of Windows Vista, Microsoft introduced a tool called ReadyBoost. It was designed to increase performance by acting as a memory cache management system and mainly used to speed up data retrieval in systems incorporating a mechanical hard drive (solid-state memory is usually faster) working alongside SuperFetch, which is part of the operating system.

There is some debate about whether ReadyBoost will make any difference to the performance of a modern, high-performance PC, particularly if it has a SSD installed (unlikely that it will). However, if you have a slightly older computer, which has a mechanical hard drive, it might still provide a helping hand.

To give ReadyBoost a try, insert a USB flash drive and access the drive properties (right-click on the Drive icon and select properties). You should see a ReadyBoost tab. Click this and then click Apply.

The drive will need to be at least 256MB in size, have an access time of 1ms or less and a throughput of 2.5MB/sec.

Create a Portable Music Library

If you travel a lot, or just want to take some music on your annual vacation, you can throw together a collection of your favourite songs/albums on even a fairly small USB drive to take with you.

Many hotel rooms will have a small stereo system into which it can be plugged, or, failing that, you can usually find a spare USB port on the TV in the room and play your music through that.

It can also be useful if you have a car stereo with a USB port, as it means you don't need to have your phone connected to the ICE system for music, and you can just leave it in place when you leave the car.
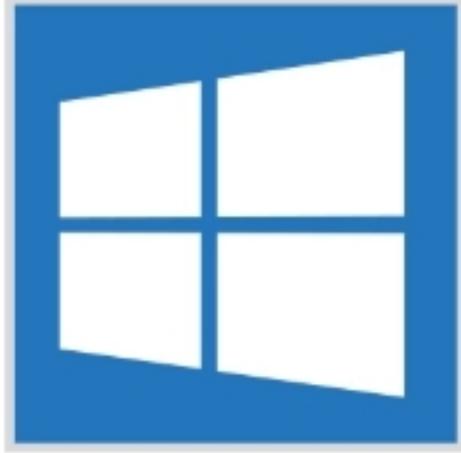
10 Ways to Reuse an Old USB Stick

It is possible to buy USB flash drives with a 1TB or 2TB capacity quite cheaply these days, making those 4GB or 8GB drives you have probably forgotten about in a drawer somewhere pretty obsolete. However, don't throw them out just yet, there are lots of uses for old flash drives aside from just storage.

Use a Flash Drive to Unlock Your PC

If you care about your digital security, you probably have a PIN or password lock on your laptop or desktop PC, but there is another way to lock and unlock your computer: Using a USB flash drive.

Software such as Predator allows you to create a key on your old USB drive which, when plugged into your computer, will automatically unlock it. When the "Key" is removed, the computer will lock again.

There are several different USB lock software options available, and almost all of the best ones cost money (although usually not very much. Predator is just $10 for the home version). If you want to try out a freeware USB locker, you can search for "USB System Lock" and "WinLockr USB Lock Key".

With most, if not all, of these USB locks, you can continue to use the flash drive as a storage drive at the same time. And most only require a small amount of space, so even tiny capacity drives will work.

Create an Emergency Antivirus Tool

Most antivirus software will allow users to create a USB (or CD/DVD) recovery tool. This can be a lifesaver if you have a virus-infected computer that you cannot access.

Open your antivirus software and check for the recovery or scanning tool option. The exact process (and size of drive needed) will vary between different antivirus software, but it is usually a relatively simple step-by-step process to follow.

Once created, label the drive, so you know what it is and not to format it, and keep it safe. In the event of a virus preventing access to your computer, insert the USB drive and boot the computer (it should automatically boot from the USB, but you may need to change the boot sequence in the BIOS).

Use it as a Mini Network Drive

If you have an unused USB drive with a decent capacity (we suggest at least 32GB to be of any real use), you can use it as a network drive. Many modern routers have a USB port, to which a storage drive can be attached, including a USB flash drive.

You will need to know how to log in to your router's firmware dashboard, as this is where you set up the drive as a network drive. You can find many guides to setting up a network drive on the Internet.

Once complete, anyone using the network can utilise the drive as storage, or you can use it for things like media streaming.

Using Remote Lock

As is usual with this type of mobile phone feature, before you can use the Remote Lock feature, you will need to make sure a few things are set up within your Microsoft account.

Step 1 For the Remote Lock feature of Find my device to work, your laptop needs to be connected to the Internet, the feature must already have been enabled and set up, and you must be using a Microsoft account (not a local account) with administrator privileges enabled.


Step 2 Sign in to your Microsoft account (account.microsoft.com) in the web browser on your computer. Click on the Devices tab at the top, or select All Devices from the panel on the account homepage. Any devices that use this Microsoft account are displayed on the screen.

Step 3 You see a warning on each device panel, telling you that "Find my device is turned off". Click the Manage button for the device on which you want to set up the feature. The next screen should show a large map, along with options to enable location, and a large blue "Lock" button.

Step 4 Click on the Lock button and a new window opens explaining what will happen to the device once it is locked. This includes logging out active users and disabling local users, enabling location tracking and locking the device. An email is sent to the account address once the lock is complete.

Step 5 Click Next, and you have the option to create a custom message to appear on the lock screen of the device. This could be a message asking anyone who finds the locked device to contact you (with contact details included, obviously), or anything else you can fit into 160 characters.

Step 6 Finally, click the Lock button to complete the process. Remember, if you manage to retrieve the device, you will need to have administrator privileges to get back into it. If you think the device is lost forever, or even if you get it back, it is a good idea to change your Microsoft account password.
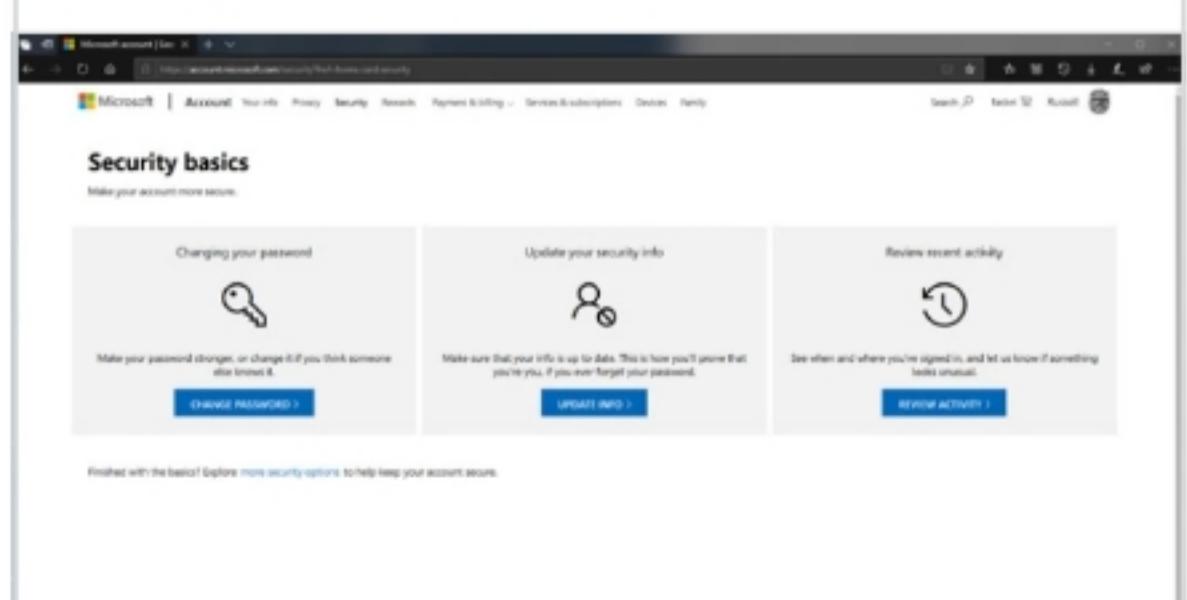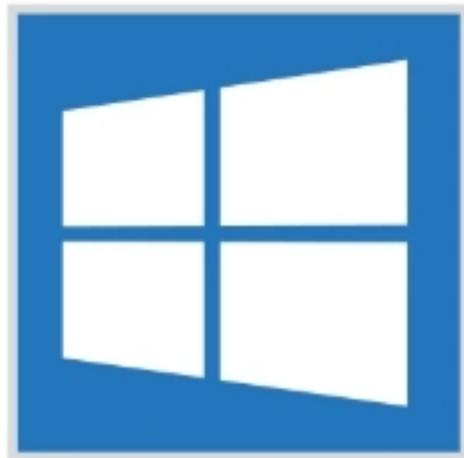
Find My Device and Remote Lock

Remotely tracking, locking, or disabling mobile devices has been the norm for several years now, helping to increase security when a device is lost or stolen. Microsoft has decided to make these features available to Windows 10 users with its own "Find my device" option.

Enable Find My Device

Find my device uses your laptop's location settings to show its last known physical location on a map, which you access from the main screen of your Microsoft account.

Step 1 Go to the Microsoft account login page (account. microsoft.com) in the browser on your computer. Sign in using your Microsoft account details (if trying to enable Find my device for a different device, make sure you sign in with the correct details) and then click the Devices tab at the top.

Step 2 You should see your device listed on the Devices screen. On the panel, click "Manage" for the device you want to locate and then click "Enable location". This is found above the map image, below the battery power indicator. You need to wait for the setting to be enabled.

Step 3 If able to, your device turns on Location access, and after a few seconds, the map image updates to display the last registered location of the device. You can scroll and zoom the map using the controls, or your mouse/ trackpad. You can also change the view style.

Step 4 If the device is offline, you won't be able to activate Find my device, and you will see a warning telling you so. You should still be able to see the previous last known location by clicking the link that appears above the warning message. This will be updated when the device is next online.

Step 5 The Extend option is the one which needs the most setting up. On the main display, right-click anywhere on the desktop and choose Display settings from the Action menu. Scrolling to the bottom of the display settings gives you another way to choose the display mode.

Step 8 If you don't want to see the taskbar on both displays, go to Settings > Personalisation > Taskbar, and scroll down to Multiple displays. You can then choose to turn off the taskbar on the second display. You can also spread a single wallpaper across both screen by selecting Span in Background settings.

Step 6 At the top of the display settings are the two displays side-by-side. 1 is your main display and 2 is the secondary display. Which side of the screen the two monitors "join" at (which side allows you to move on to the second monitor) is controlled by dragging the display boxes here to the left or right.
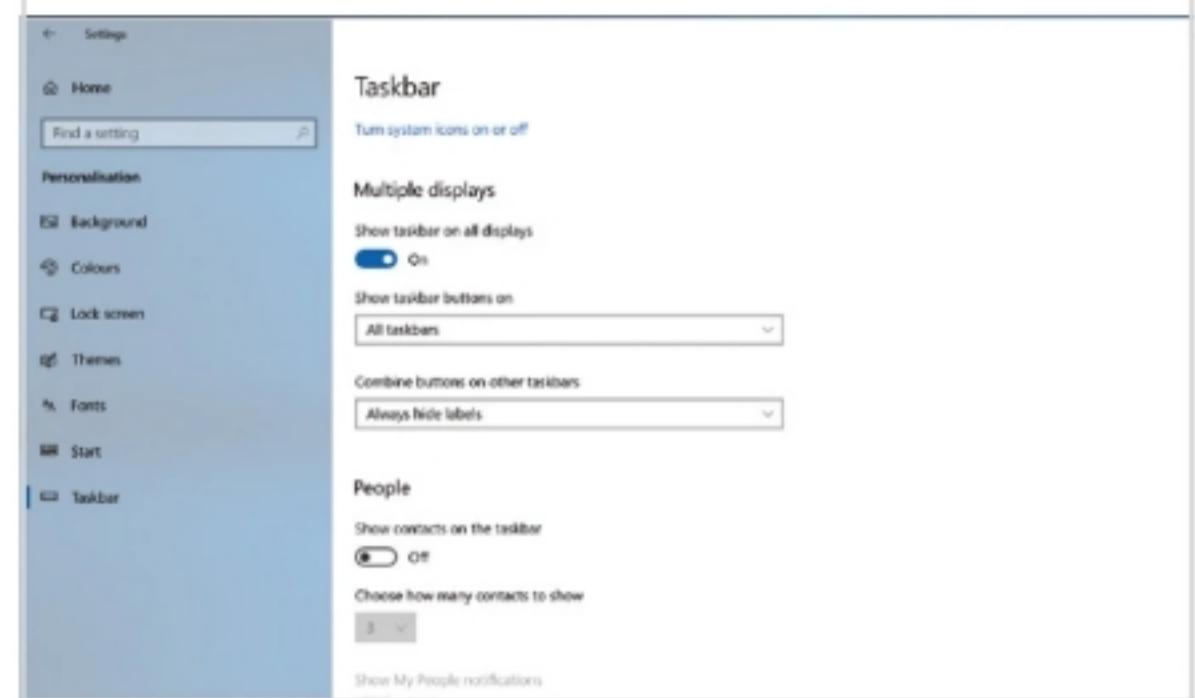
Step 9 Spreading out across the two monitors in Extend mode is as easy as clicking and dragging a window, be that a browser window, app or anything else, to the "joined" side of the main screen. Just keep the mouse pointer moving and it will continue on to the second screen seamlessly.

Step 7 You can view settings for each display independently, by clicking on one you want to see, and then scrolling down. You can change the scaling, orientation and resolution of each display to best suit the specification of the monitor, if it is the case that the two monitors have different maximum resolutions.
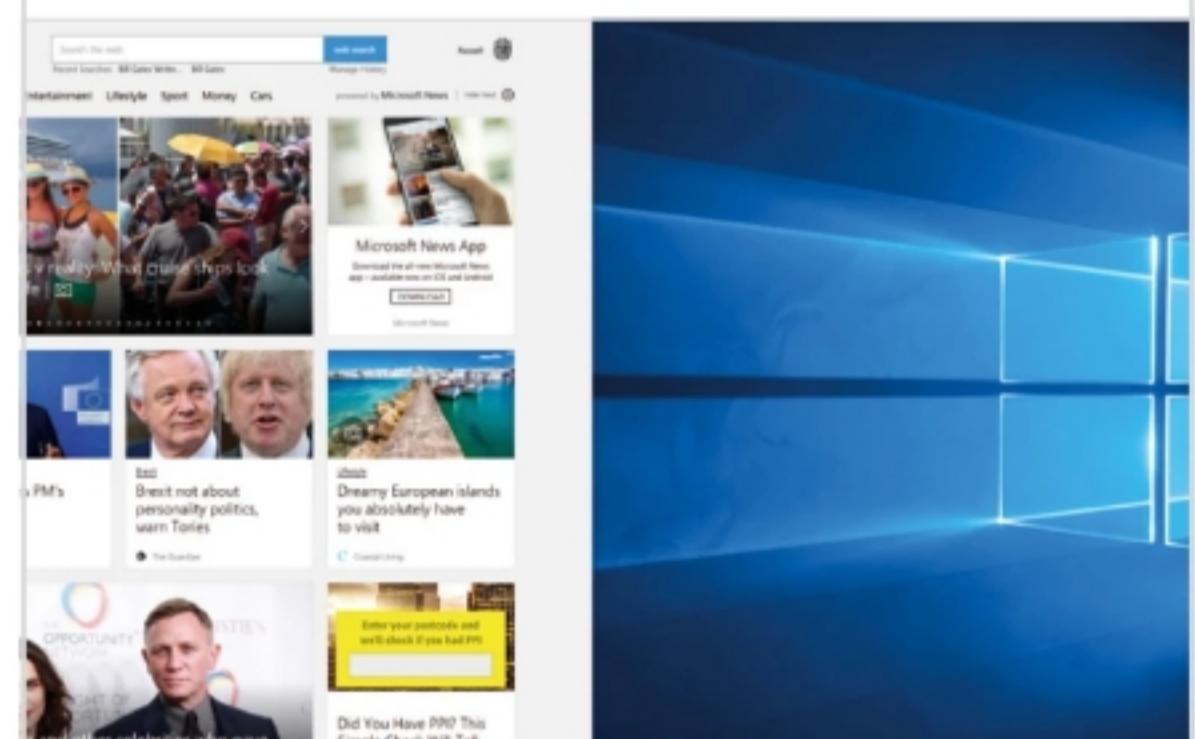
Step 10 Depending on the graphics card software you have installed (Radeon for example), you will usually have further display options for the second monitor in the graphics adapter settings. This might include Virtual Super Resolution and GPU scaling, helping you match up resolution settings.
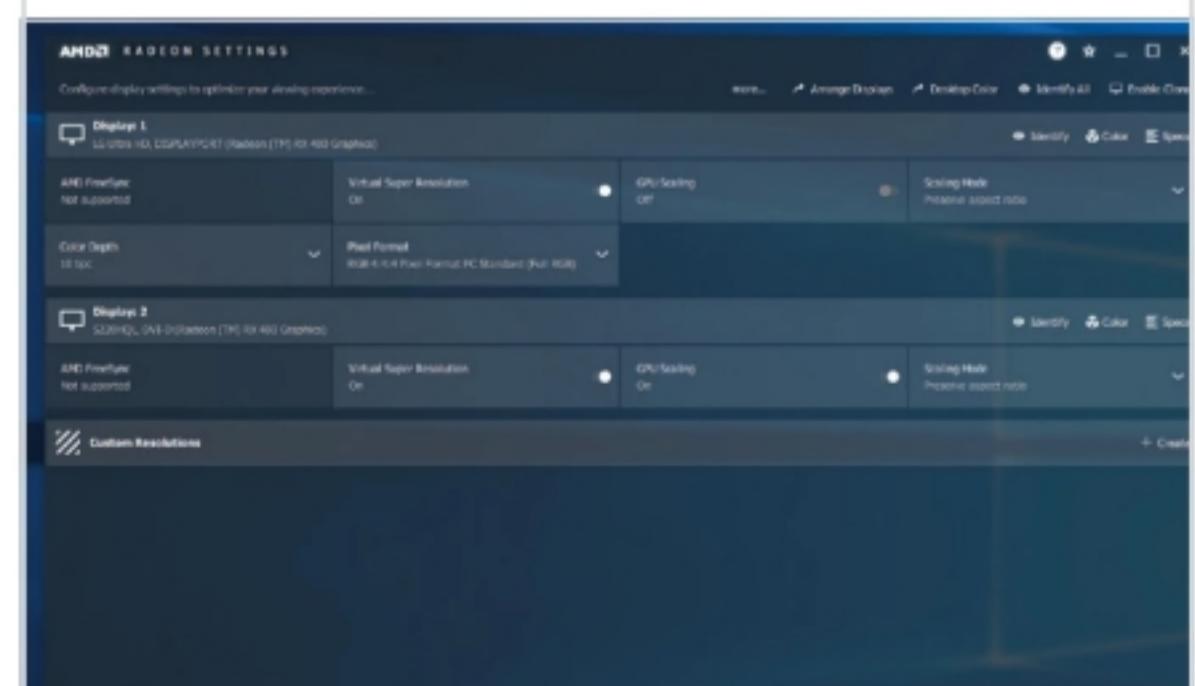
Setting Up Dual Monitors

With a second monitor and the required connectors on your PC, setting up Windows 10 to display over two screens is easy. Having a second monitor can really help to increase productivity, and allow you to stay more organised when you're at your computer.

Setting Up a Dual Display

Matching up the resolution and size of your two chosen monitors will give the best results but even mismatched monitors can work really well in dual format.

Step 1 You will obviously need to ensure that your PC has the requisite connections for two monitors (two HDMI, VGA or DVI ports, or a combination of these). Check the back of your PC tower or the side of your laptop to find out. With your PC turned off, connect both monitors to the available ports.

Step 2 Boot up the computer and log in. Windows should automatically detect that two displays are connected and you should see both of them displaying a desktop. Your main display will have all of your icons on it, whilst the new second display will be blank apart from the taskbar along the bottom.

Step 3 You will now need to configure the dual monitor setup to your liking. Windows 10 allows you to easily choose how the dual monitors display. Press Windows Key + P to see the Project side panel. Here you can choose from PC Screen Only, Duplicate, Extend or Second screen Only options.

Step 4 PC screen Only and Second Screen only are fairly self-explanatory, displaying an image on one or the other screens. Duplicate is also fairly easy to understand, showing exactly the same display on both screens. Extend turns the two monitors to one long screen that you can spread out across.
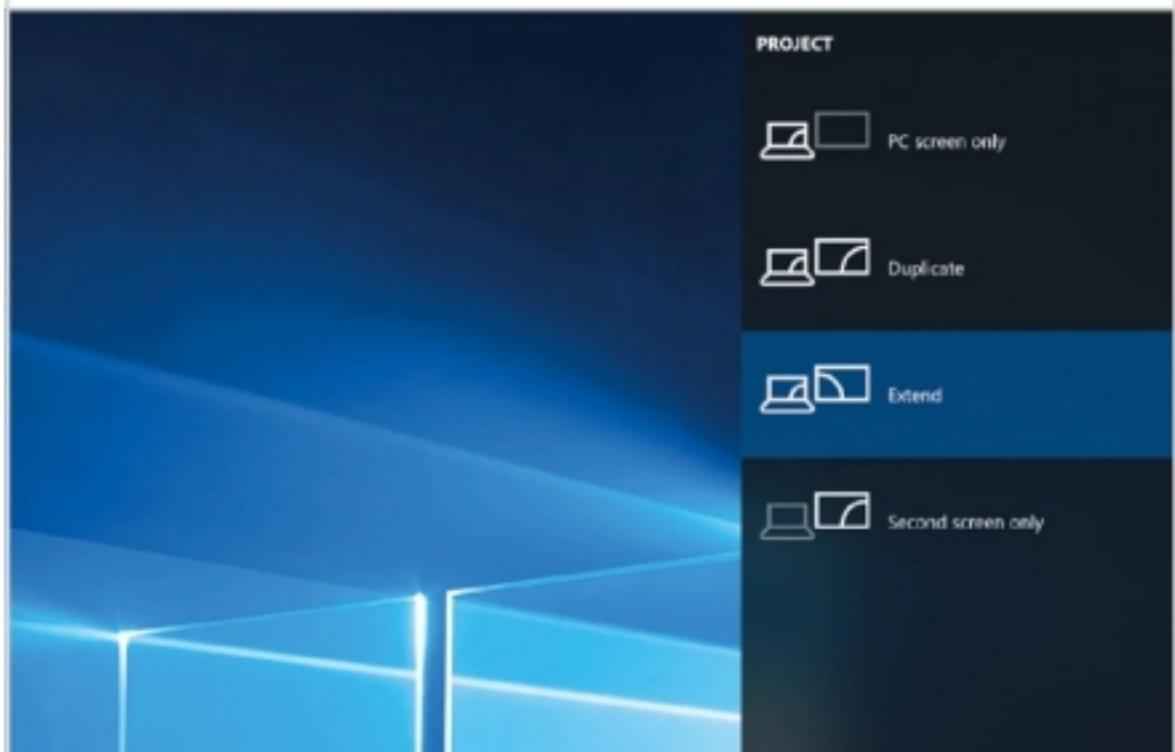
Install a Wireless Printer

A wireless printer is one that is connected via Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or by means other than a USB data cable. This can also include a printer connected to another PC on the network.

Step 1 Open the settings and head in to Devices and then Printer & Scanners. Look for your printer in the list of available devices and if it is there, click on it and then click 'Add printer'. If your printer is switched on and connected to the network, Windows 10 should find it easily.

Step 2 Available printers can include all such devices on a network, such as Bluetooth and wireless printers or those that are plugged into another computer and shared on the network. You might need permission to install some printers, depending on the type of network you are connected to.

Step 3 If you use wireless access points, extenders or multiple wireless routers with separate SSIDs, you'll need to ensure that you're connected to the same network as the printer for your PC to find and install it. If the printer does not appear in the list you may need to add it manually.
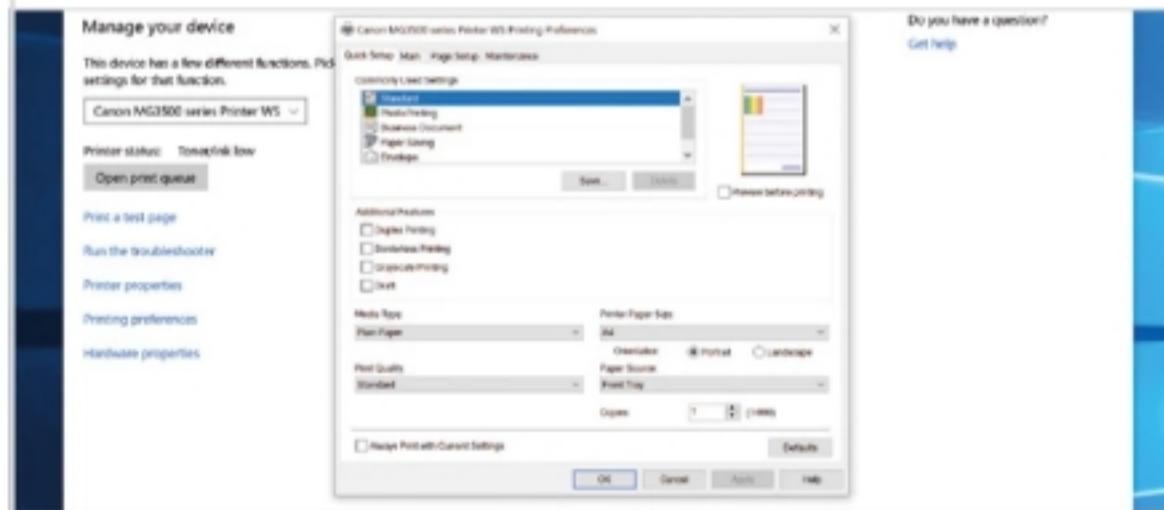
Step 4 Click on 'The printer I want isn't listed' when it appears. This opens a tool that will show you, step-by-step, how to find and install software for an older printer, or one which is not supported by Windows 10 drivers. If this fails, try looking for the software on the manufacturer's website.
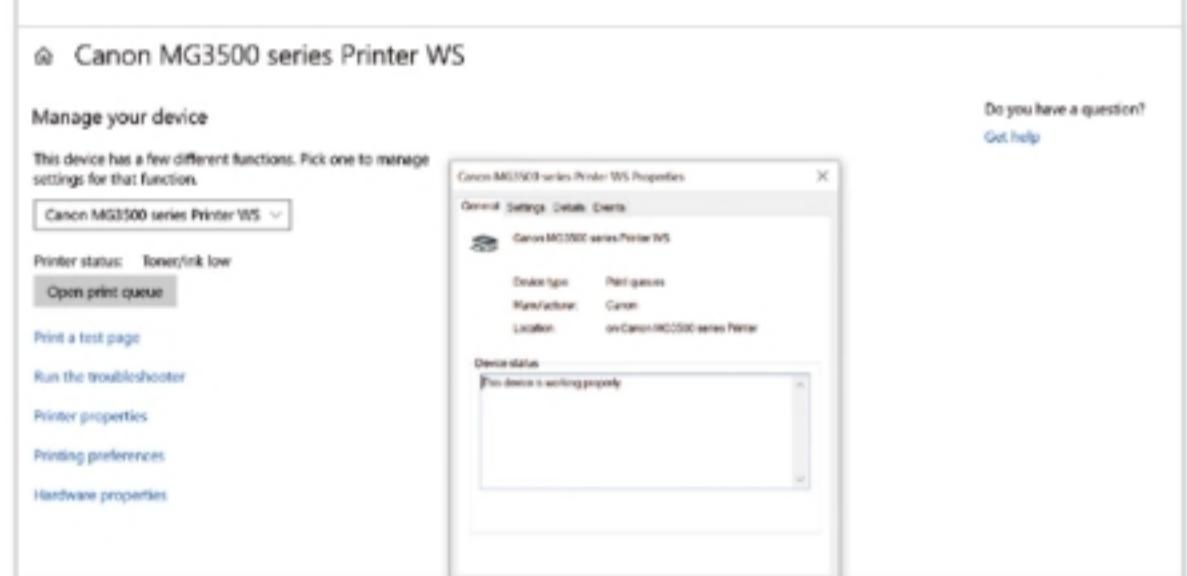
COMMON PRINTER PROBLEMS

Printers are getting easier and easier to install, thanks to plug and play software, but if you are having problems do these two things first.

Check for Old Drivers Most printers require driver software to work properly. If you recently upgraded from one version of Windows to another, it's possible that the current printer driver is for the previous version of Windows and may not work (or work well) with Windows 10. Check Windows Update for new drivers.
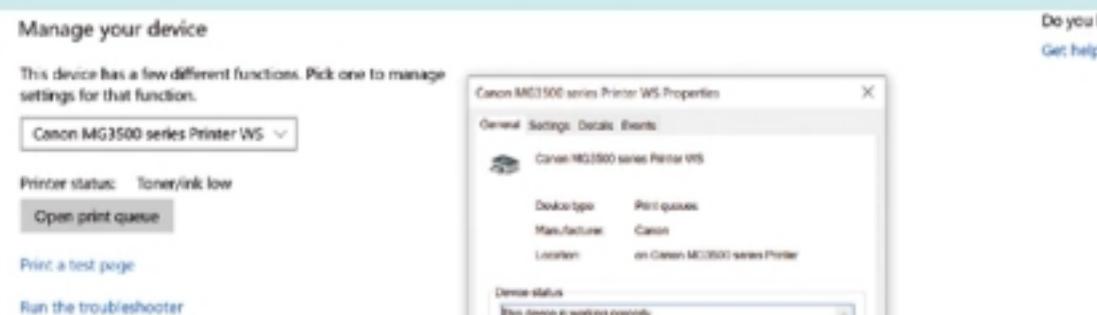
Run the Troubleshooter Head in to settings > Update & Security > Troubleshoot and run the Printer Troubleshooter. You can also type 'Printing problem' into the search box, select the search result labelled 'Help from Microsoft' and then select the troubleshooter to download it.
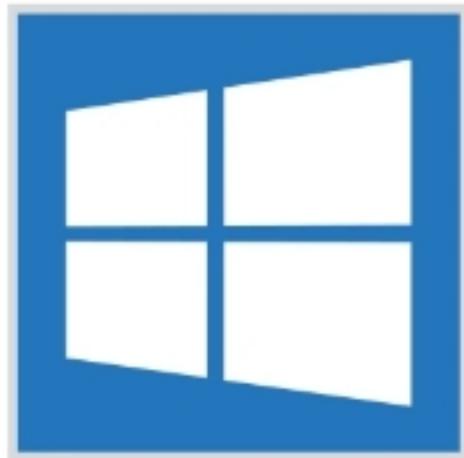
Installing a Printer in Windows 10

When you connect a printer to your PC or add a new one to your home network, you can usually start printing straight away. Windows 10 supports most printers, so you probably won't have to install special software. Here's how to install printers in Windows 10.

Install a Local Printer

A local printer simply means one that is physically connected to your laptop or desktop computer via a USB data cable, rather than being connected wirelessly.

Step 1 In most cases, all you have to do to set up a printer is to connect it to your PC and let the plug and play software do its work. Plug the USB cable from your printer into an available USB port on your PC and turn the printer on. If nothing happens, try restarting your PC with the printer connected.

Step 2 If the printer does not set up automatically, you will need to do it yourself. Click the Start menu button and head into Settings. Here you need to look for Devices and then Printers & Scanners. You should see a list of available devices, hopefully with your printer's name shown.

Step 3 If so, click on it and then click Add Printer. The printer should then be installed and ready to use. If you don't see your device in the list, click 'Add printer or scanner' and see if the scan finds it. If it still does not appear, click the link that appears: 'The printer I want isn't listed'.
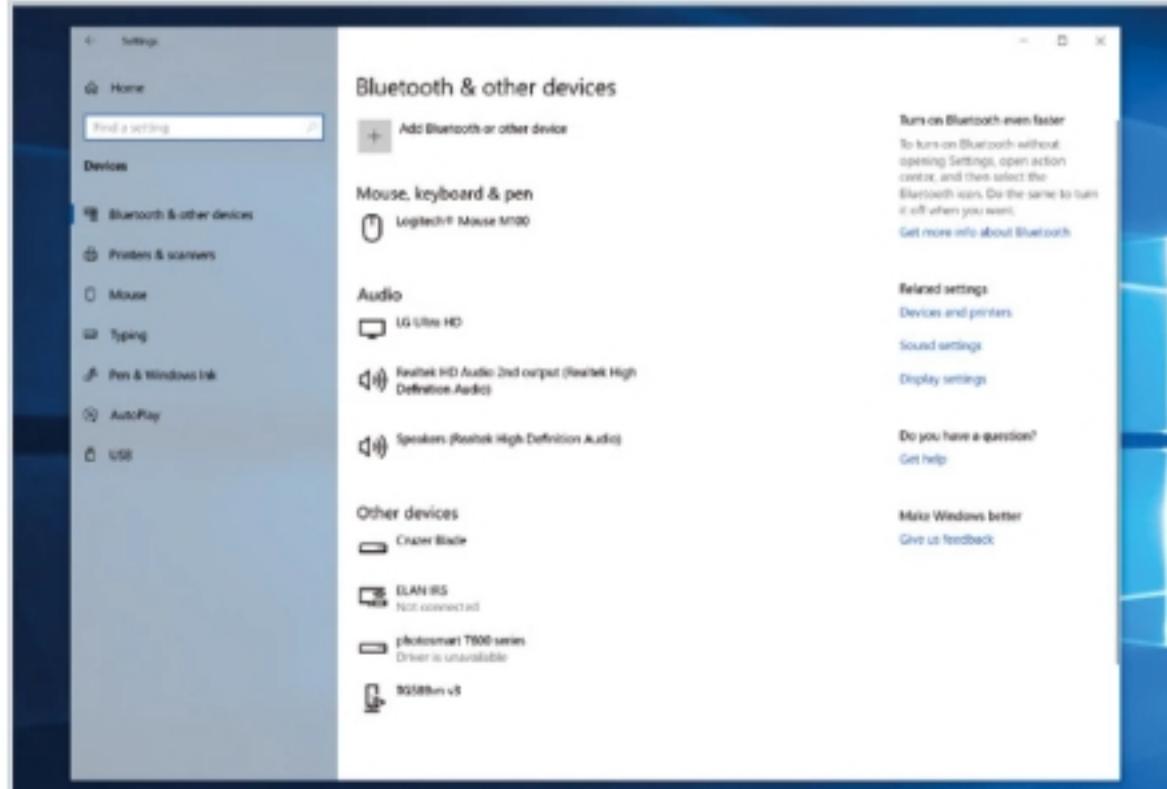
Step 4 This opens a step-by-step tool that will show you how to find and install software for an older printer, or one which is not supported by drivers pre-installed with Windows 10. If that still fails, try going to the printer manufacturer's website and download an installer or drivers.
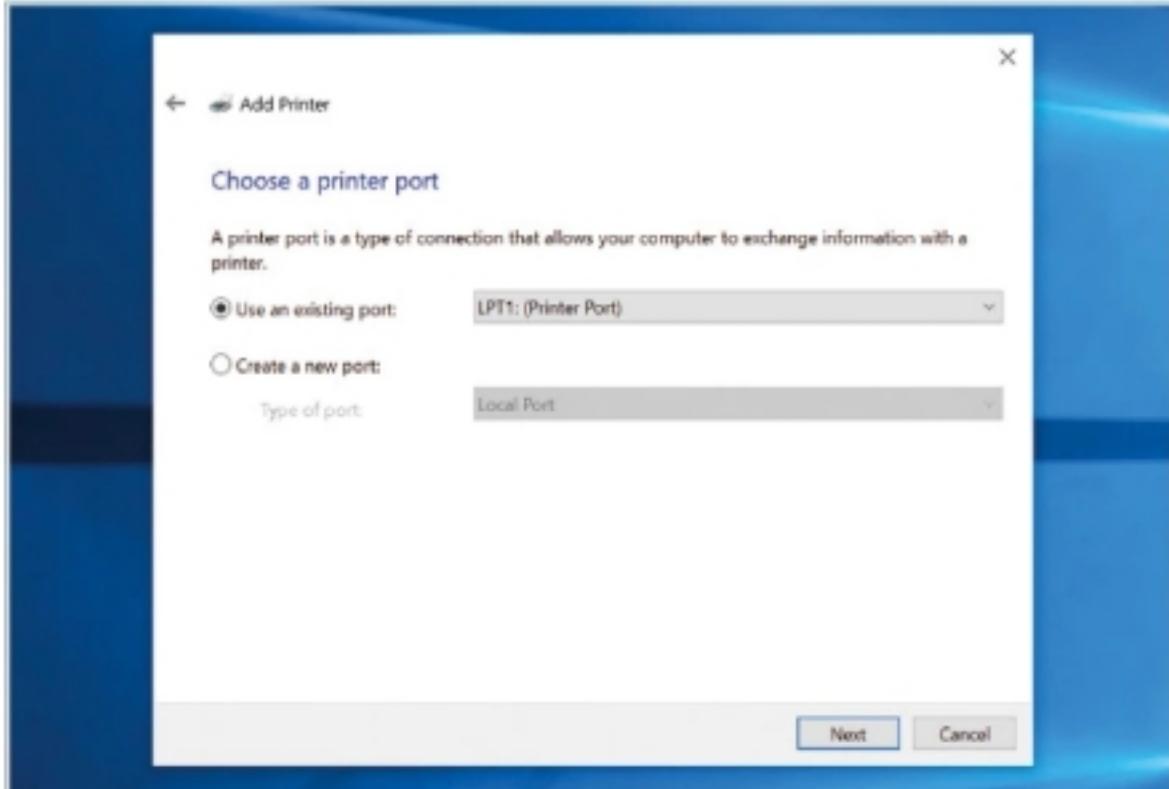
Step 5 The captured image will now appear in the previously blank Snip & Sketch window. If the image is all you need, you can simply click the Save button in the top right and choose where you want to store the image. You can also make a copy of the image here, as well as share the image via email.

Step 6 To capture a freeform screenshot, open the snipping mode again and click the second of the tools at the top. You can now use the mouse to draw around the area you want to capture, cutting out any shape you want. When complete, the freeform screenshot will open in the window as before.

Step 7 In the top middle of the Snip & Sketch window, is a set of editing tools that you can use to alter the captured image. These give you the ability to write or draw on the screenshot, adding annotations or highlighting areas. You can also crop the image down to size.

Step 8 Click on any of the pen or pencil tools to select them and then click again to open an additional tools menu. This menu will let you change the colour of the pen or pencil, as well as change the thickness of the line that is drawn, using the slider at the bottom of the menu panel.

Open the Snipping Mode with PrtScn

Although there is no dedicated keyboard shortcut using the Windows key, you can set the PrtScn button to open the snipping tool when pressed.

Step 1 Until Microsoft decides to give it a dedicated keyboard shortcut, you will need to take advantage of the Ease of Access options to create a quicker way to open the snipping tool. Head into Settings > Ease of Access > Interaction section and look for the Keyboard options.
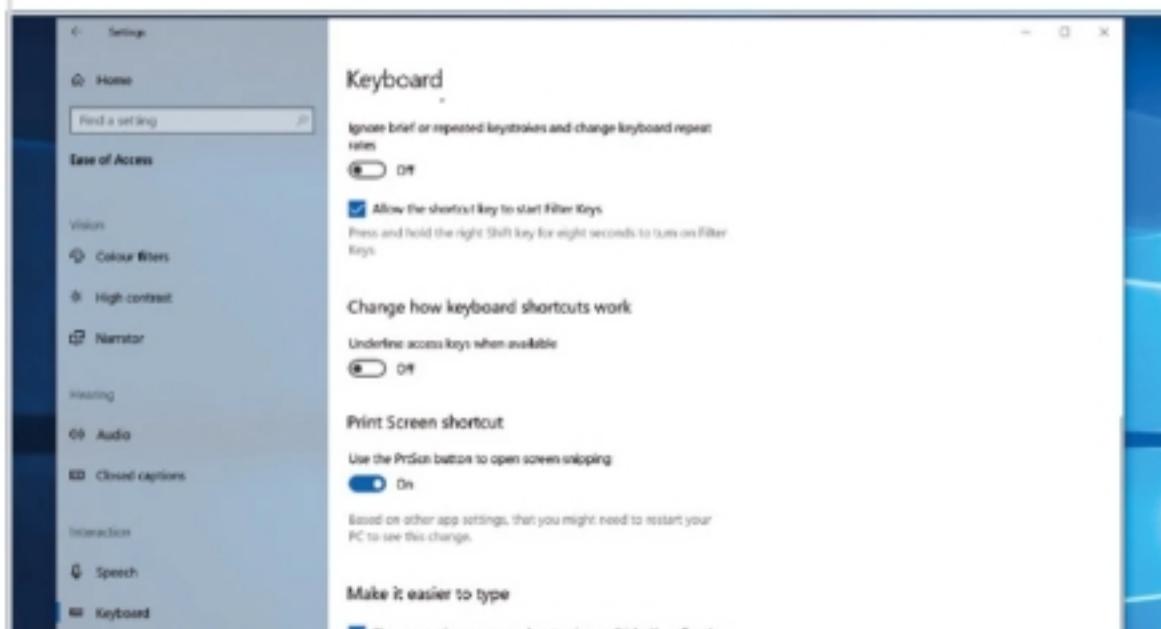
Step 2 Scroll down to the 'Print Screen shortcut' heading and use the slider to turn the shortcut on. You may need to restart your computer before the shortcut will work. You can now press the PrtScn button (usually in the top right of your keyboard) at any time to open snipping mode.
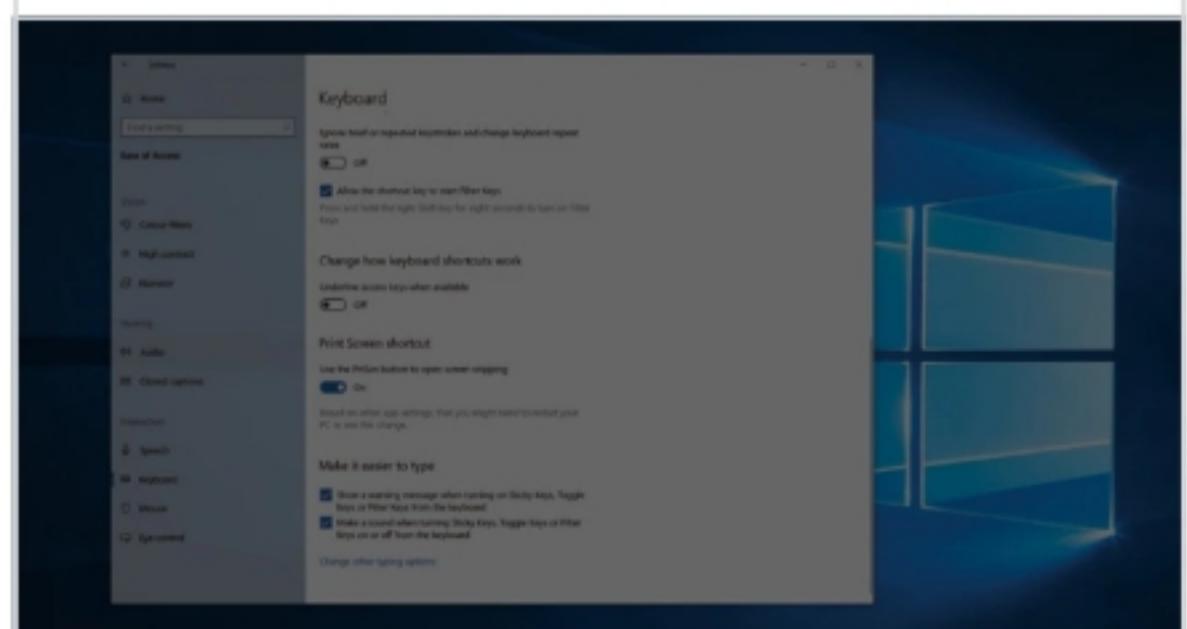
Screenshots with Snip & Sketch

The new Snip & Sketch tool, which will eventually completely replace the old Windows snipping tool, includes a few extra features that help you to easily capture and annotate screenshots on your computer, and then save them or share them with others.

Taking Screenshots with Snip & Sketch

There are many reasons why you might need to capture an image of your screen, but whatever the reason, the new snipping tool allows you to do exactly that, and much more.

Step 1 There are a couple of different ways to open the Snip & Sketch tool but there's no dedicated keyboard shortcut at this time. You can open the app by clicking on it in the Start menu apps list, by searching for it in the search box or by clicking the Screen snip button in the Quick Actions panel.

Step 2 If you open the tool using either of the first two methods, it will open as a blank window with a variety of buttons along the top for editing or writing on captured images. The New button takes you to snipping mode. If you open the tool using Quick actions, it goes straight to the snipping mode.

Step 3 Click the New button to begin snipping. The screen will darken and you will see a small toolbar appear at the top. From left to right, the tools here are Rectangular clip, Freeform clip and Fullscreen clip. Let's start with the most useful of the three, the Rectangular clip tool.

Step 4 Move the + cursor to the corner of the area you want to capture and click and hold the left Mouse or Trackpad button. Drag the cursor down and you will see the capture area highlighted. When you have the correct area of the screen highlighted, release the Mouse button to snip.
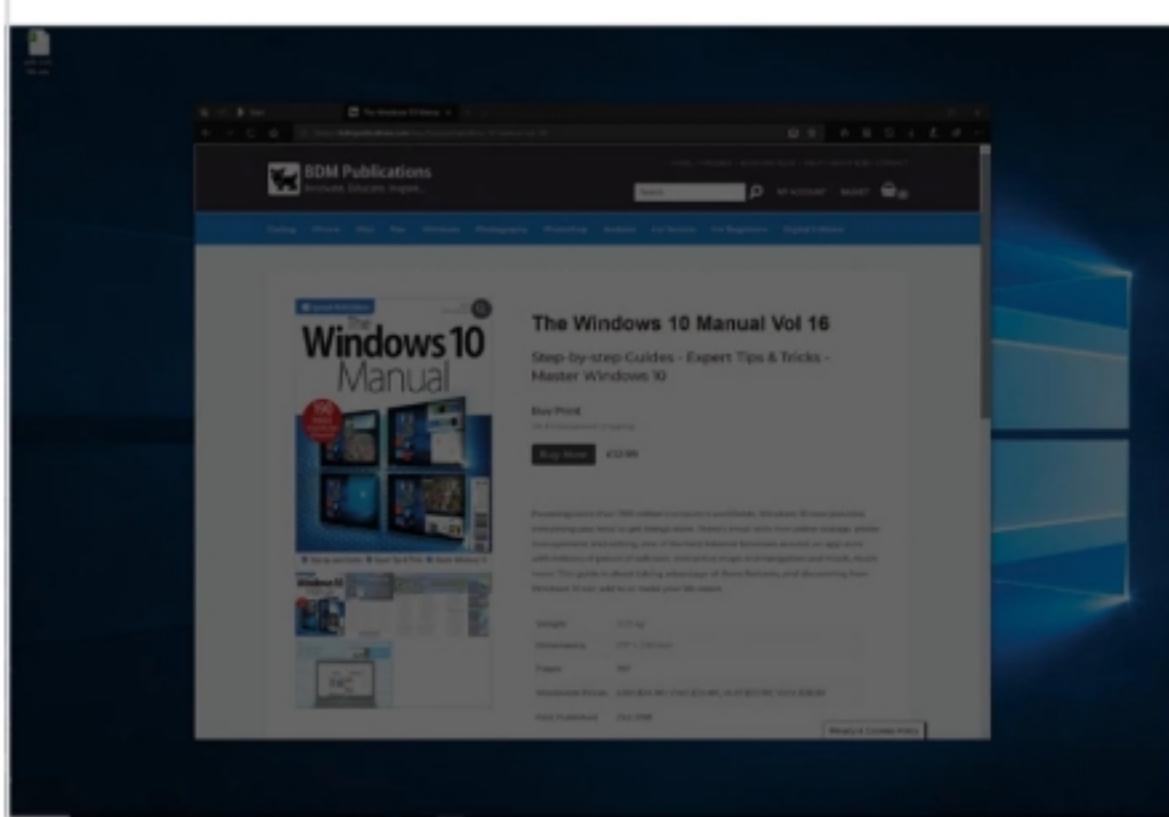
Step 5 The things you have copied can be made ready to paste by selecting them in the Cloud Clipboard. You can then use Ctrl + V to paste or right-click and select Paste from the menu. When you select something in the Cloud Clipboard, it remains there to be pasted again.
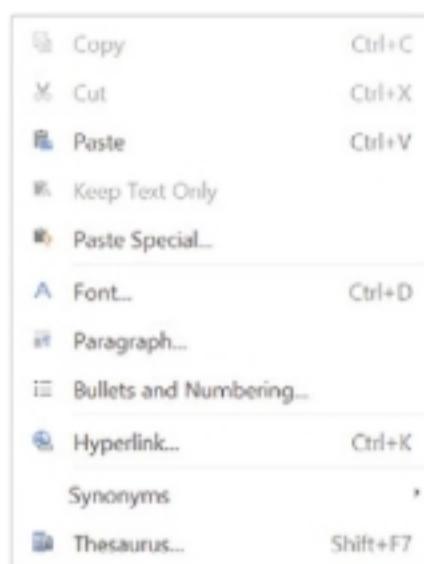
Step 6 You can clear the items from the clipboard easily, either by opening settings > System > Clipboard and clicking on 'Clear clipboard data' or by opening the clipboard window and clicking the 'Clear all' button. Once the clipboard is cleared, you cannot recover the copied data.
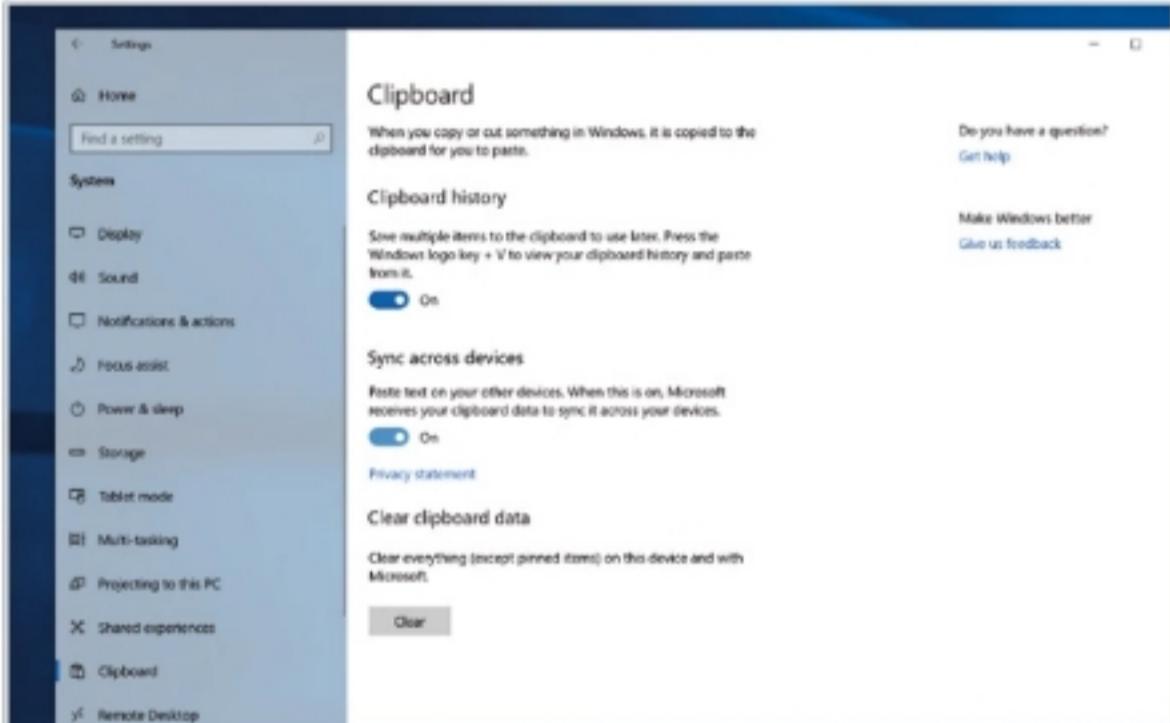
Step 7 If there is copied data in the Cloud Clipboard that you think you will always need to keep, you can pin it. Pinned items in the clipboard do not get cleared when using the methods described in the previous step. To pin something, move your mouse over the item and then click the pin icon that appears.
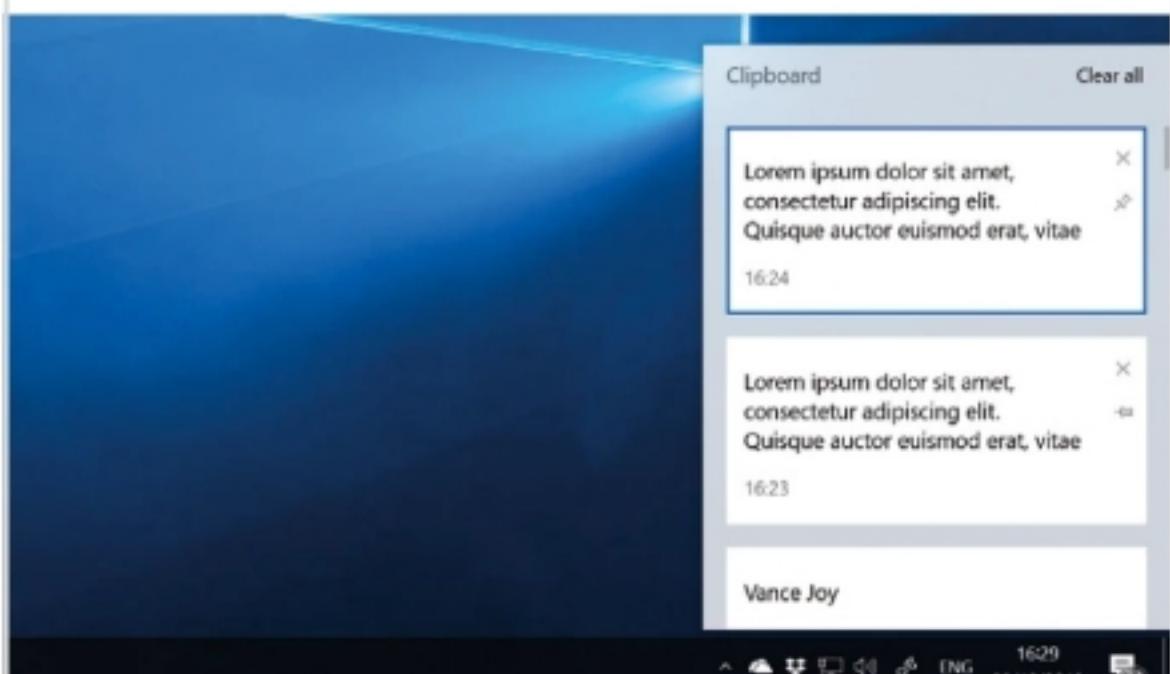
Step 8 Pinned items even remain in the Cloud Clipboard when you restart your computer. The only way to remove them now is to unpin them from the clipboard. To do this, highlight the item again and click the pinned icon. Copying something that is already saved in the clipboard doesn't overwrite it.
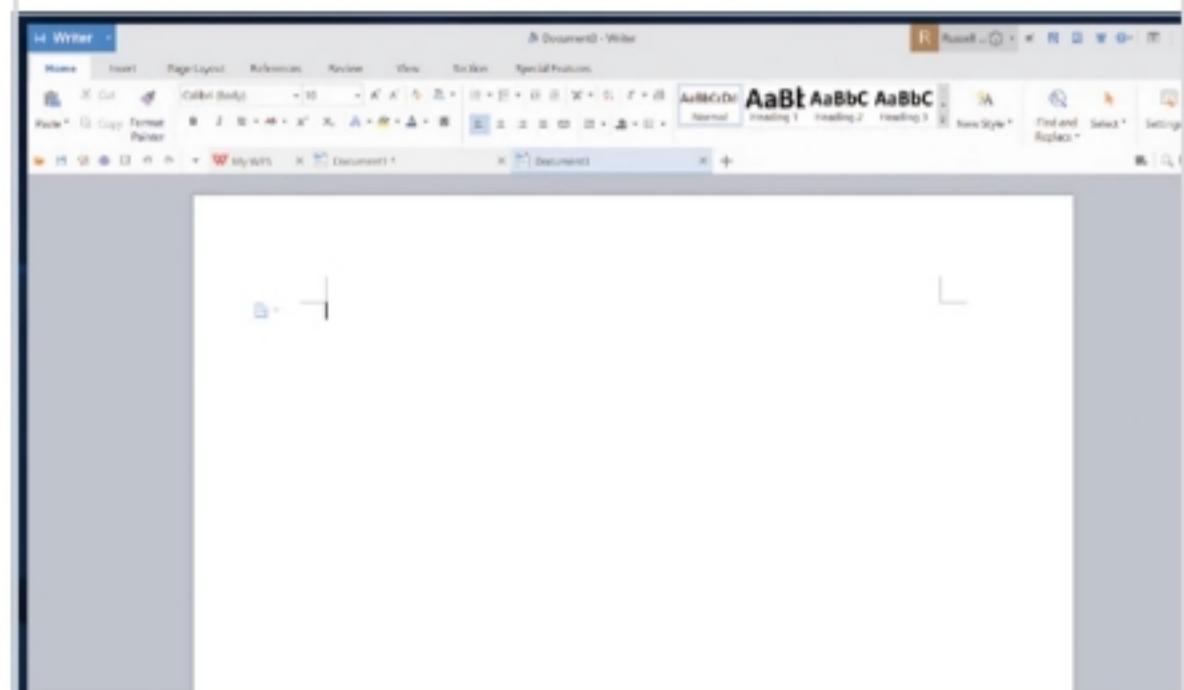
Step 9 Syncing clipboard data between devices works using the same Microsoft Graph technology that powers the Timeline, introduced in Windows 10's April 2018 Update. You need to be signed into both devices with the same Microsoft account for this feature to work.
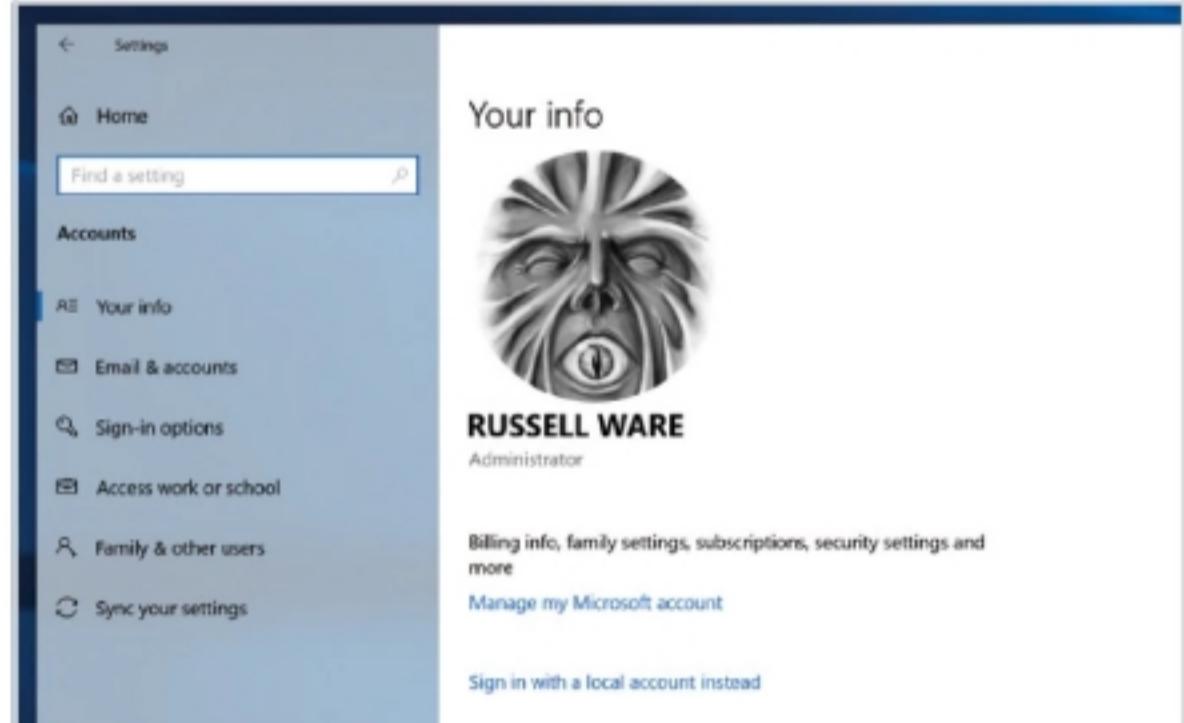
Step 10 If you select 'Never automatically sync text that I copy', you'll have to manually choose what you want to copy. To do so, open your Clipboard history with Windows+V, hover over an item in your Clipboard history and click the cloud-shaped Sync to Other Devices icon.
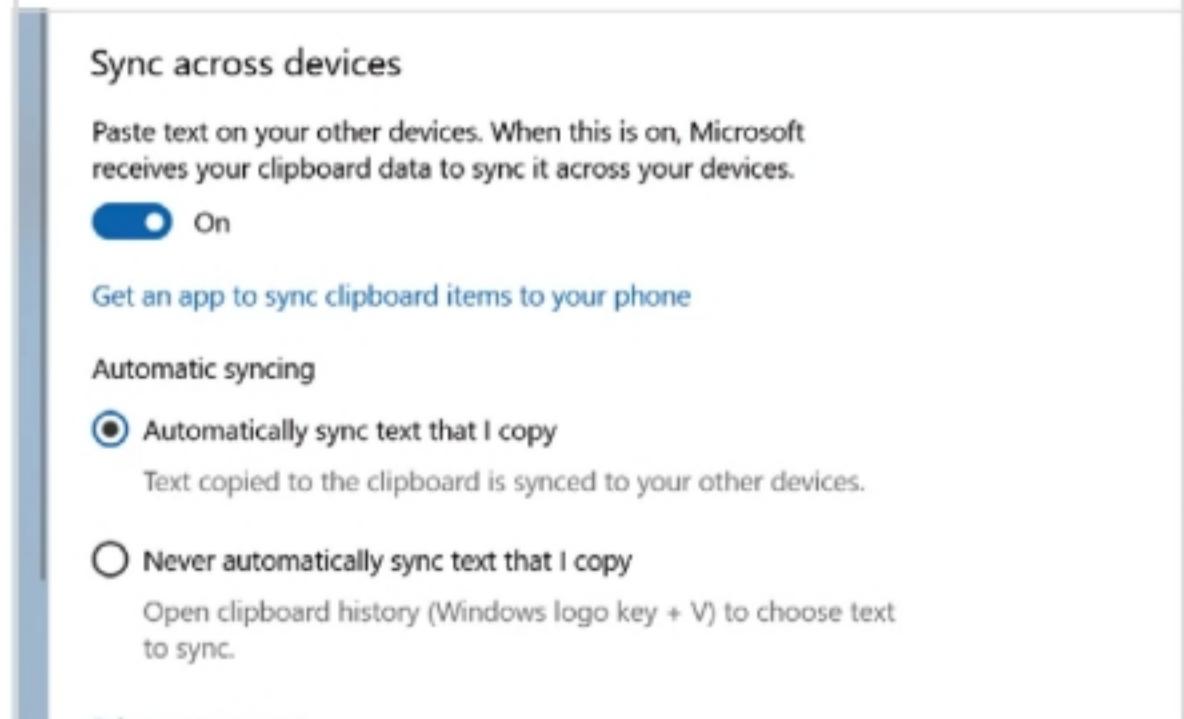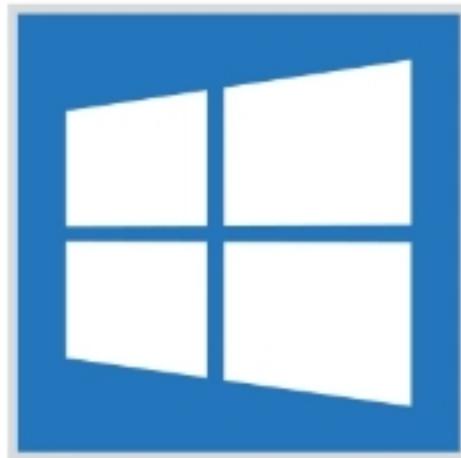
Using the Cloud Clipboard

Copying and pasting is something we all do. However, what do you do if you need to copy the same few things again and again and how do you copy content across your devices? The new Cloud Clipboard solves both of those problems in a single, simple interface.

A New Way to Copy + Paste

The Cloud Clipboard gives you a new way to cut and paste. Simply press the Windows key + V at any time and you'll see the Cloud Clipboard panel appear in the bottom corner of the screen.

Step 1 Before you can use all the features of the Cloud Clipboard in Windows 10, you will need to enable them in the settings. Go to Settings > System and look for the Clipboard section. You can turn on the clipboard history using the slider toggle. To sync across devices, click 'Get started'.

Step 2 Follow the instructions to confirm your Microsoft account (if this is requested) and then choose whether you want to enable automatic syncing across devices or not. If you want to be able to sync the clipboard to your phone, you will also need to download and install an app on that device.

Step 3 With the Cloud Clipboard settings configured to how you want, you can start using the feature. Just like the old clipboard, things are added to it when you copy something. This can either be by pressing Ctrl + C with some text highlighted or right-clicking on an image or file and selecting Copy.
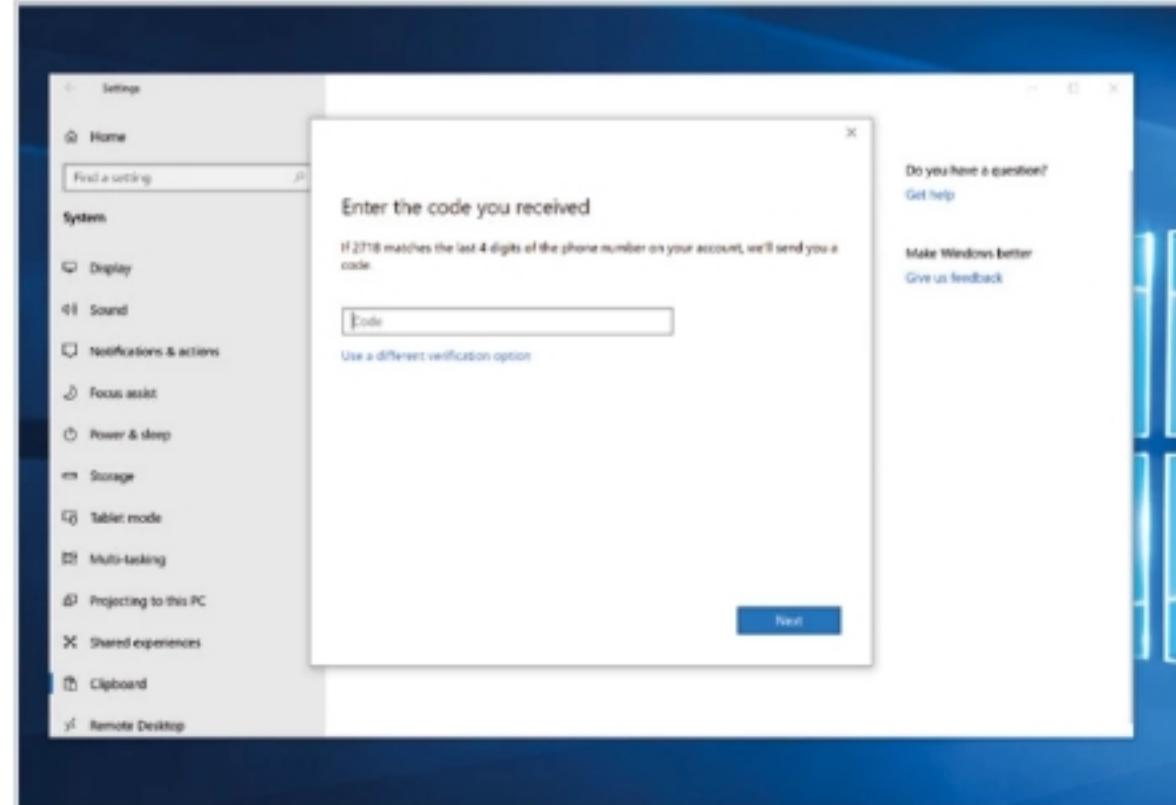
Step 4 The difference now is each thing you copy is stored in the clipboard, rather than being overwritten by the next thing you copy. To see the things stored in the Cloud Clipboard, press Windows Key + V. In the new Cloud Clipboard window, you will see a list of the things you have copied.
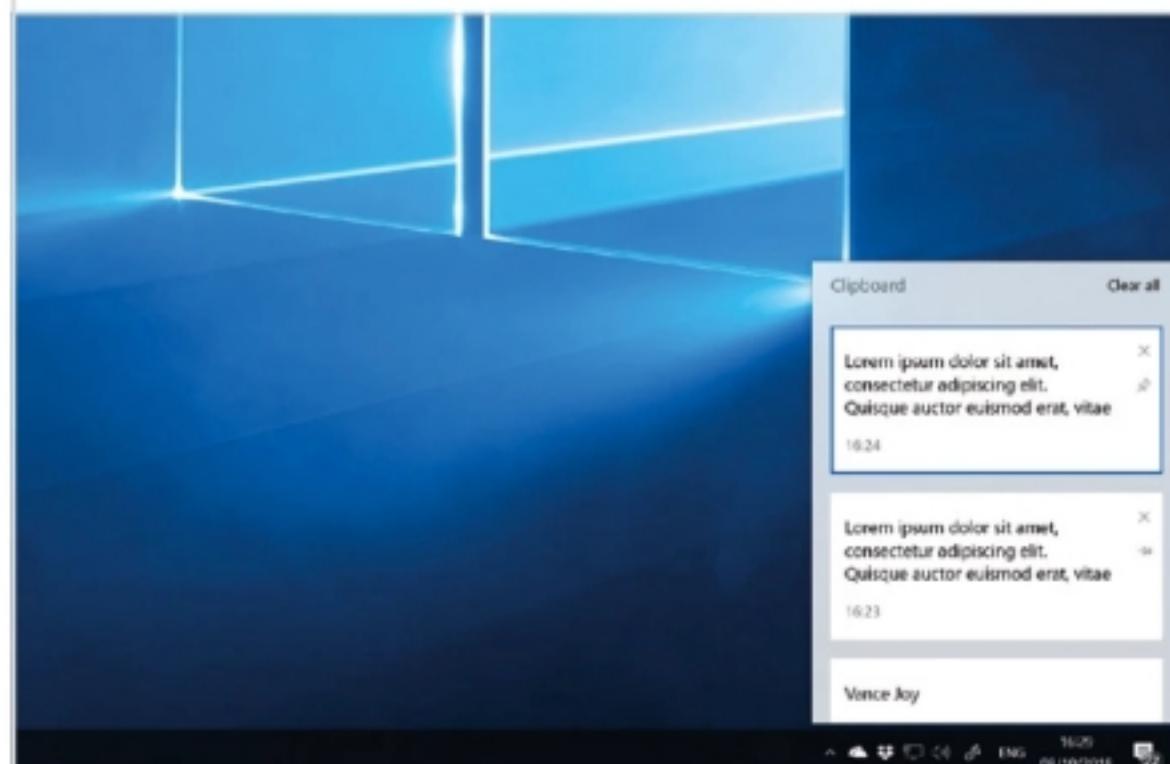
Performance Display

The performance overlay shows you a real-time snapshot of how much strain is being put on the processor (CPU), graphic card/chip (GPU) and the internal memory (RAM). It allows you to monitor how much power a game is using, but also works for any action you are performing (watching videos, etc.).

Manage Overlays

You can rearrange the position of all of the overlay panels by clicking on their top bars and dragging them into the desired position. Several of the panels can be pinned, meaning that they will remain visible on screen even after the Game Bar is hidden. Just click the Pin icon in the top bar.

Spotify Music

The Game Bar now features Spotify integration. You can sign into your Spotify account and use the Spotify widget to play music and control playback. This is more convenient than Alt+Tabbing out of full-screen games to manage the background music.
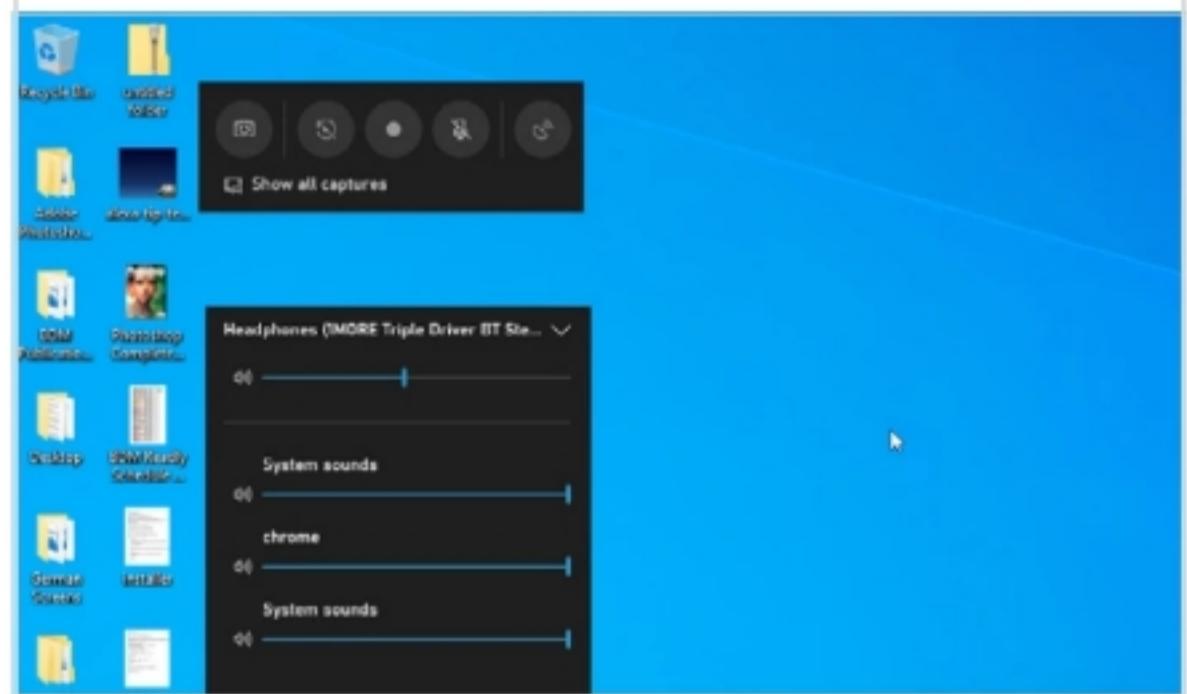
Game Bar Settings

You can access the settings for the Game Bar via the Main settings app in Windows 10, or you can click the Gear icon in the top middle panel of the Game Bar itself. This top middle panel also gives you access to the folder containing any previous captures you have taken of the screen.

Xbox Panels

There are also two (currently in Beta testing) panels for chatting to others using the Xbox network, and finding groups of like-minded gamers. To use these two additional panels, you will need to be signed in with the Microsoft account associated with Xbox Live.
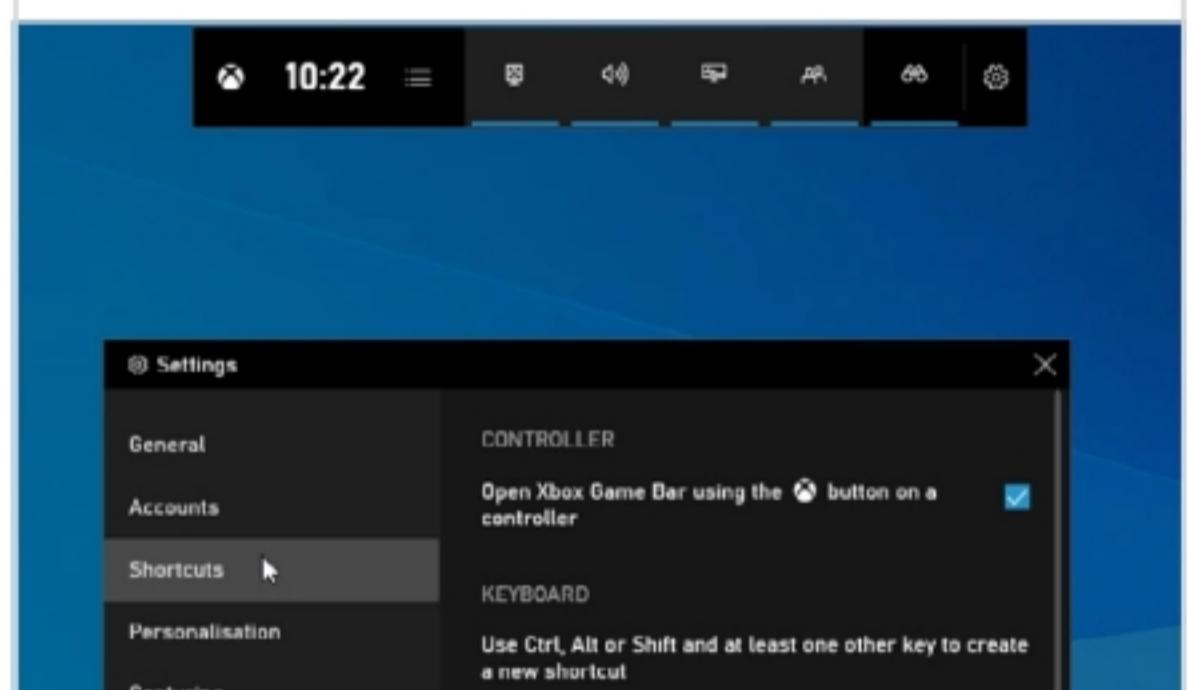
Close Game Bar

You can close the Game Bar overlay screen by clicking anywhere else on the screen, or by pressing Windows Key + G again. If you want to disable the Game Bar completely, open the Main settings, go to the Gaming section, and use the slider to disable the tool.
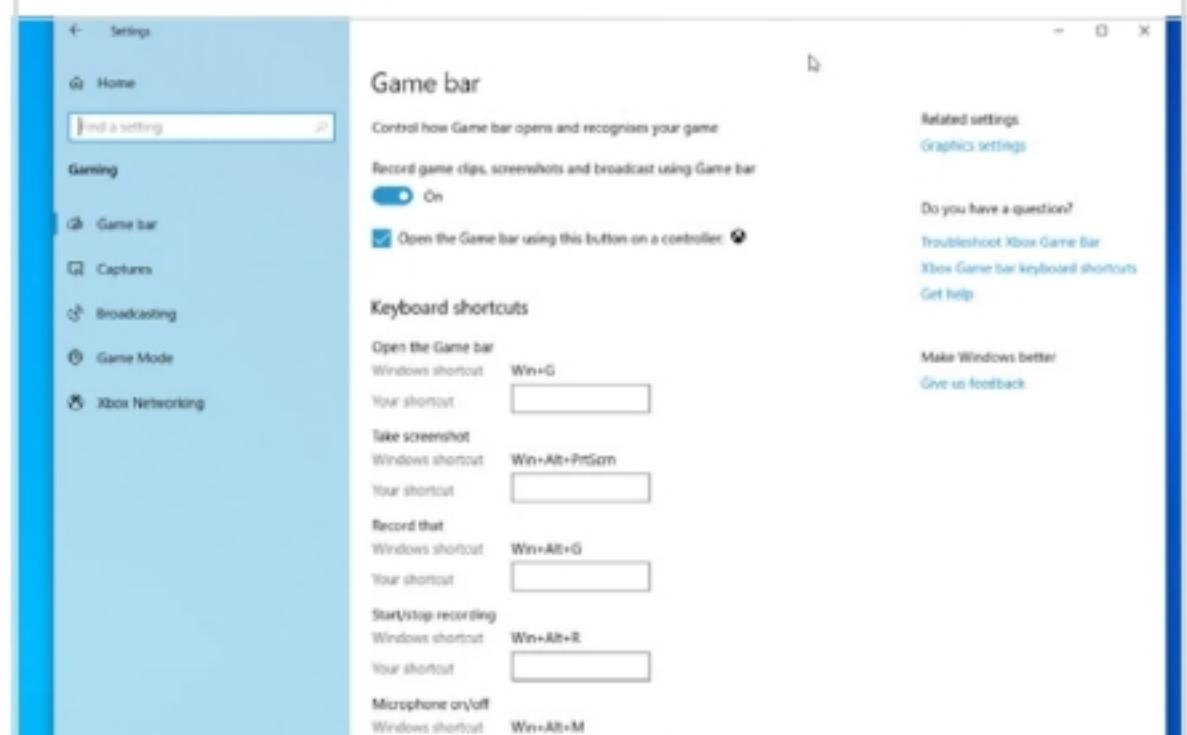
The New Windows 10 Game Bar

Windows 10 hasn't seen many new features recently but one area that did have a major upgrade was the Game Bar tool. Even if you have never played a single game on your Windows PC, the Game Bar can still be useful.

Using the Game Bar

No longer solely about gaming tools, the Game Bar now includes quick panels for volume control, resource usage and even playing music.

Open the Game Bar You open the Game Bar in the same way as previously, by pressing Windows Key + G, or by opening the Start menu and scrolling down to the bottom where you will see "Xbox Game Bar". The new Game Bar will open, dimming the screen slightly and displaying a number of overlays.
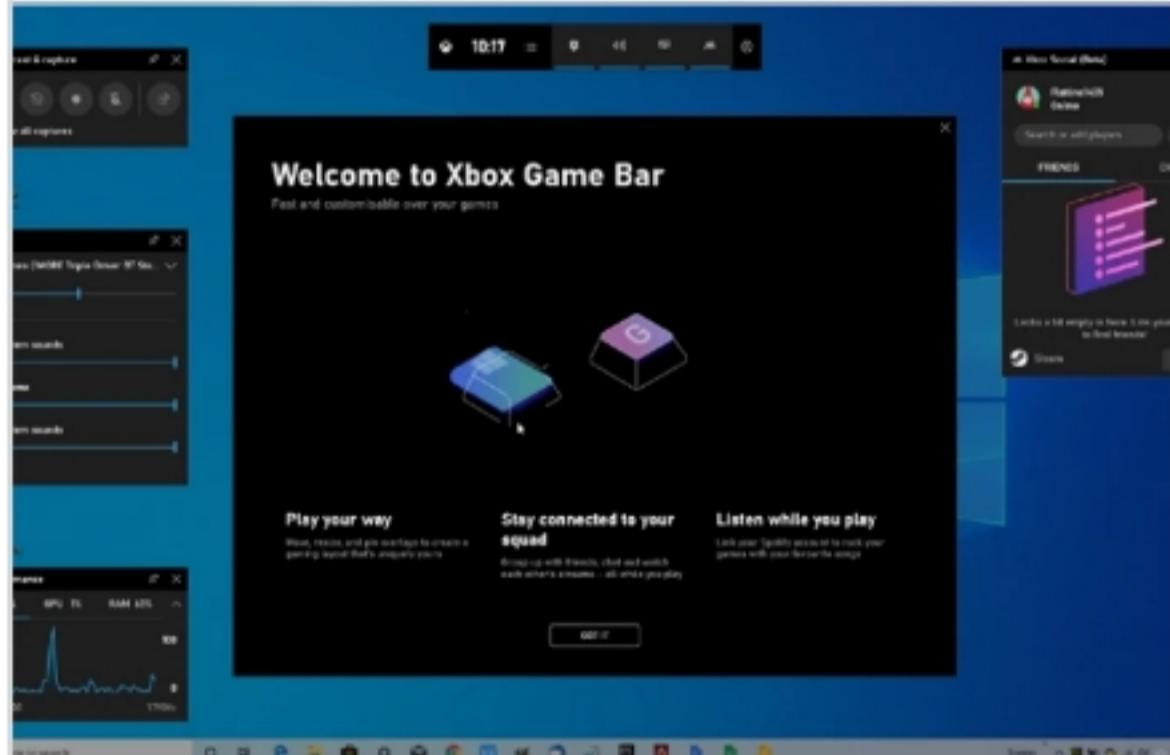
Broadcast & Capture These are the controls that were previously in the Game Bar, allowing you to take screen captures, record on-screen action, control an in-game microphone, and broadcast your game to Mixer, Microsoft's gaming broadcast service (similar to Twitch). You can also view previous captures.
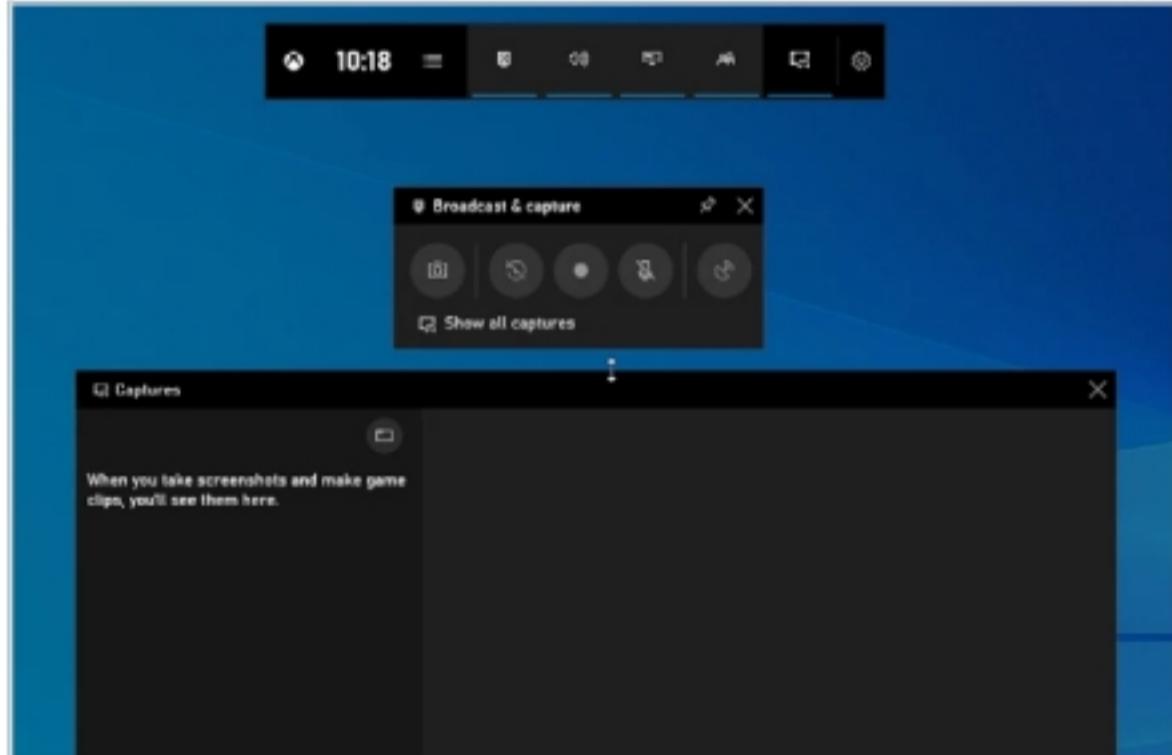
Adding Overlays By default, four or five overlays and controls will be active. You can choose to show several more by clicking the Menu button, on the thin panel with the time displayed in the middle of the screen at the top, adding the Overlay buttons to this panel, and then clicking on each to open the overlay.
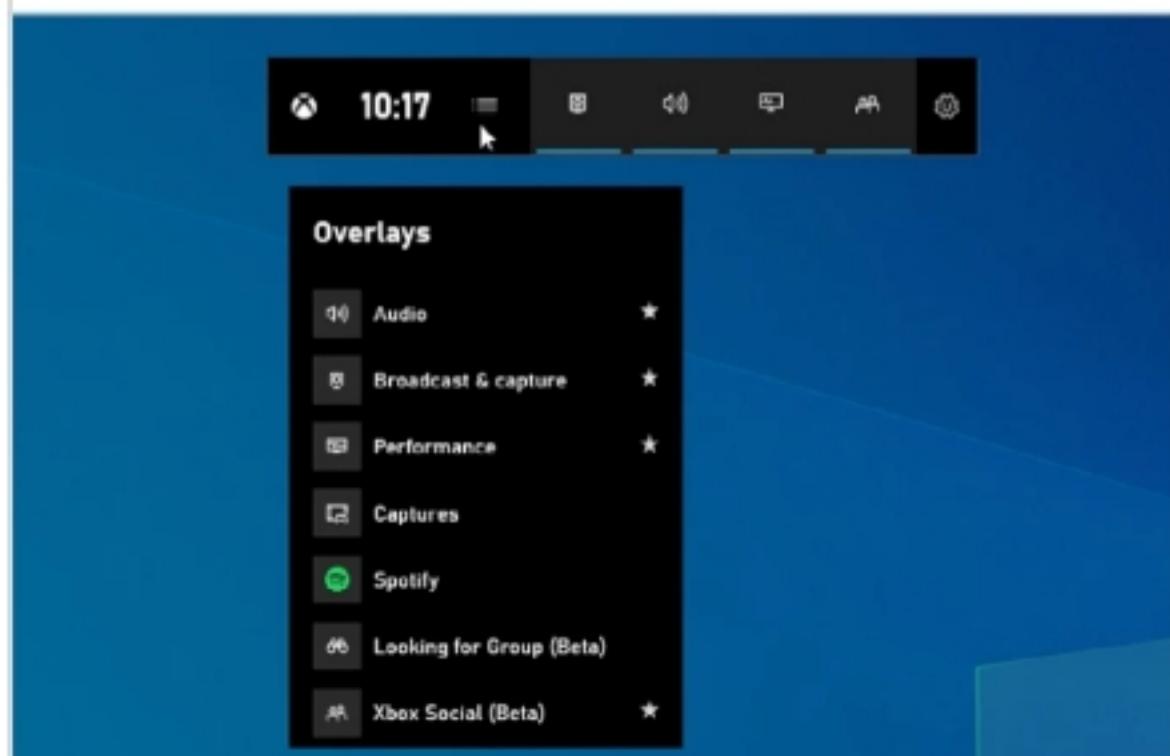
Audio Controls As in many Windows 10 apps, there's a search box in the top right. The search will pick up results from across the Store, whatever you search for. Here we've found a film we'd like to see. This page is roughly the same whether you're looking at a game, movie or app.
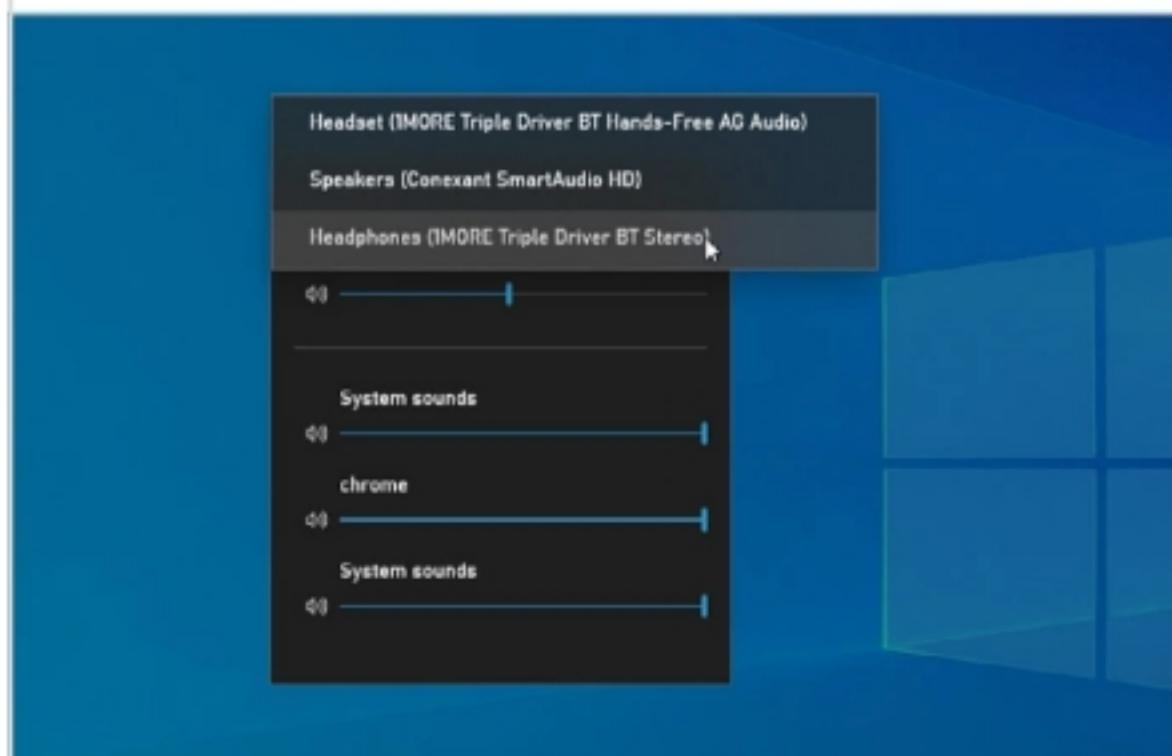
Step 5 Once you have created one note, adding another is easy. Click the + button in the top left and another yellow blank note will appear. Repeat until you have enough notes. You can also right click on the icon in the taskbar and then New Note or use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + N.


Step 7 You don't have to stick to the default yellow colour note that you start with. Right click on any of your notes and then click the menu icon at the top and you can change the colour to a variety of presets. This is particularly handy if you want to make certain notes stand out.

Step 6 You can move the notes around the desktop however you wish, even overlapping them if required. Your sticky notes will stay in the position you put them in, even when you shut down and restart your computer, as long as you don't close the software manually.
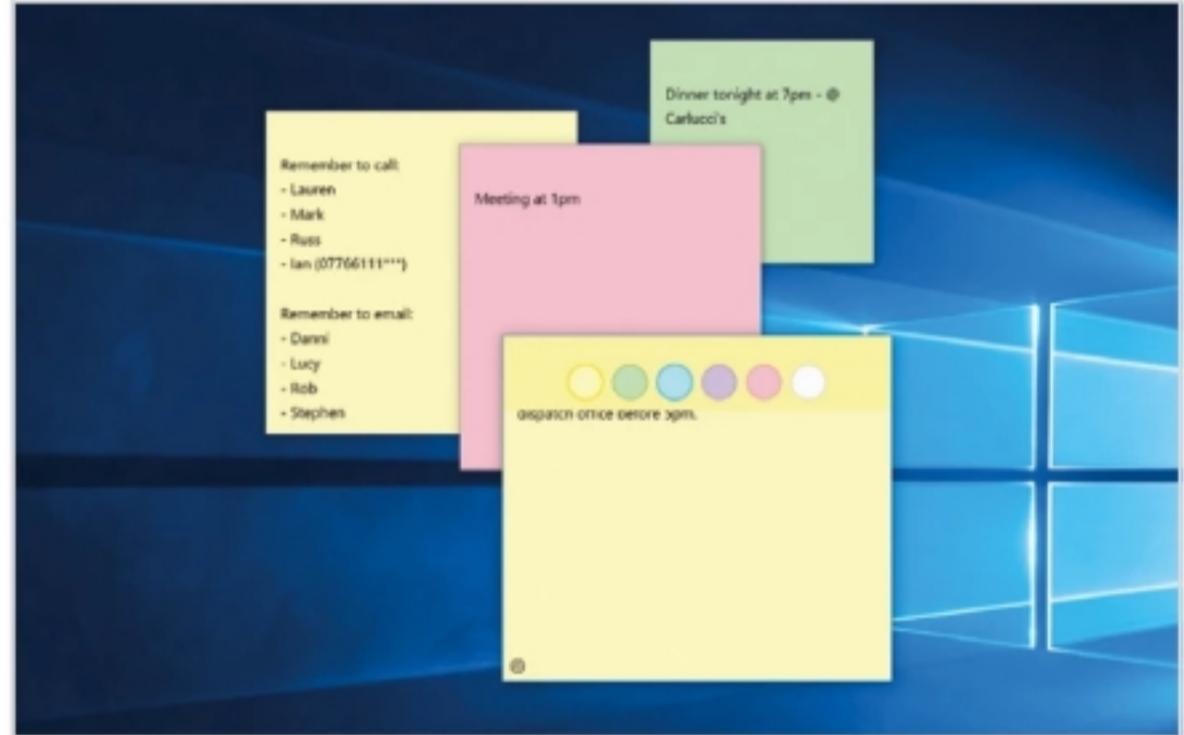
Step 8 You need to keep the app open for your notes to remain on the screen but as long as it is, you can shut down and reboot and the notes will remain on the desktop. To close notes, you simply need to click on the trash icon in the top right corner. Close the last note and the software closes too.
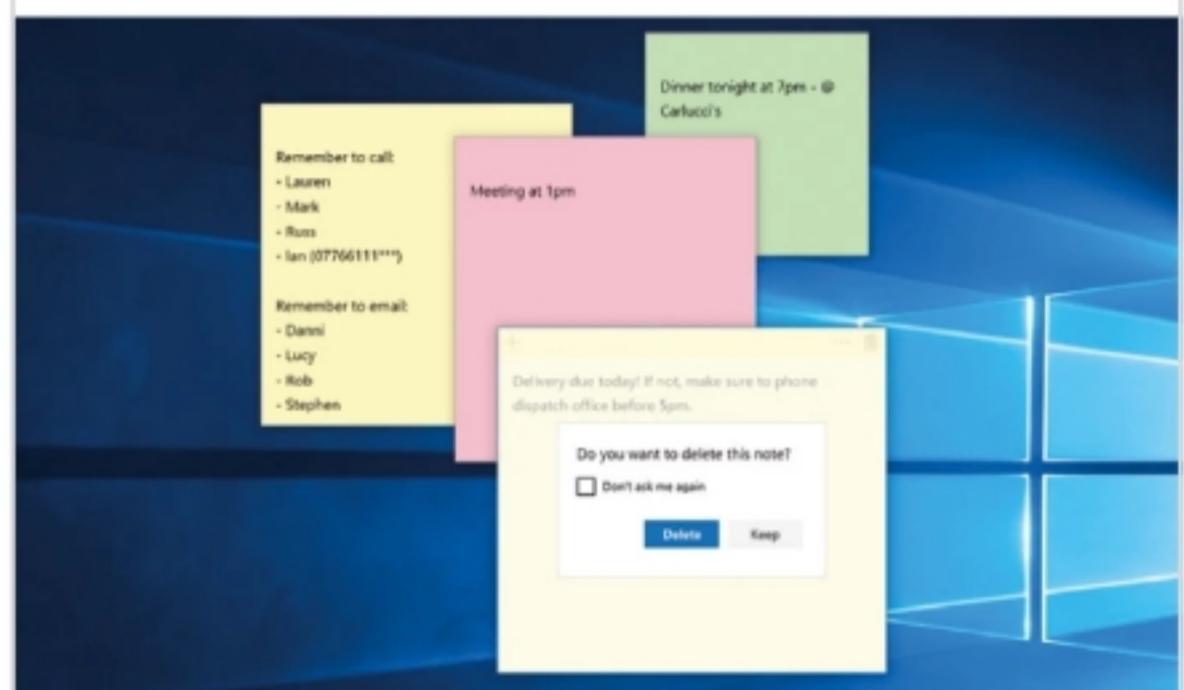
WINDOWS 10 ANNIVERSARY STICKY NOTES

Windows Ink, available for the first time in the Anniversary update, brings the writing you do every day into your digital world. Now, using a Windows 10 device, graphic designers can be more creative, musicians can write digital music, lawyers can edit documents with the power of the pen and students can make mathematical equations and learn by writing. All of this is available to any Windows 10 user, but even more useful for those with a touchscreen PC.
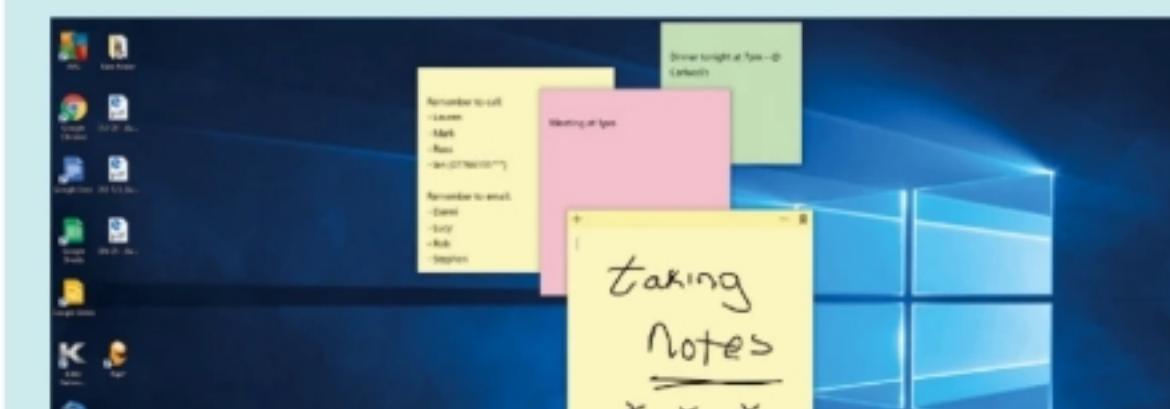
• Quickly and easily take a note, sketch on a screenshot or draw an idea.
• Smart Sticky Notes help you remember common tasks like reminding you of flight times or offering directions using Maps.
• Key apps have new Ink-specific features, like using handwriting in Office, Ink annotations in Microsoft Edge or drawing custom routes in Maps.

Using the Sticky Notes Tool

There are lots of Windows 10 apps for making reminder lists but sometimes you just need a simple note to jog your memory. There is a simple and often overlooked bit of software in Windows, that allows you to add sticky notes to your screen quickly and easily.

Adding Sticky Notes

The Sticky Notes software comes preinstalled with every version of Windows since Vista, although it has been improved slightly with each new release.

Step 1 You can find the Sticky Notes software in the All Apps menu of Windows 10 or you can search for "Sticky Notes" using the search field in the taskbar. If you can't find it under S in the main All Apps menu, it might be within the Windows Accessories folder instead. Click to open the first note.

Step 2 A blank Sticky Note will now appear on your screen. You will see that it looks just like a real Post-it Note, except the corners won't curl up and the glue won't fail. Click anywhere on the body of the note to make the cursor appear, if it isn't visible to begin with.

Step 3 You can now type out your note. This can be a simple "Remember to call Ian", a shopping list (with the formatting added yourself) or any other simple note you might need. The note is not confined to the size of the original sticky note, with a scroll handle appearing if you reach the bottom.
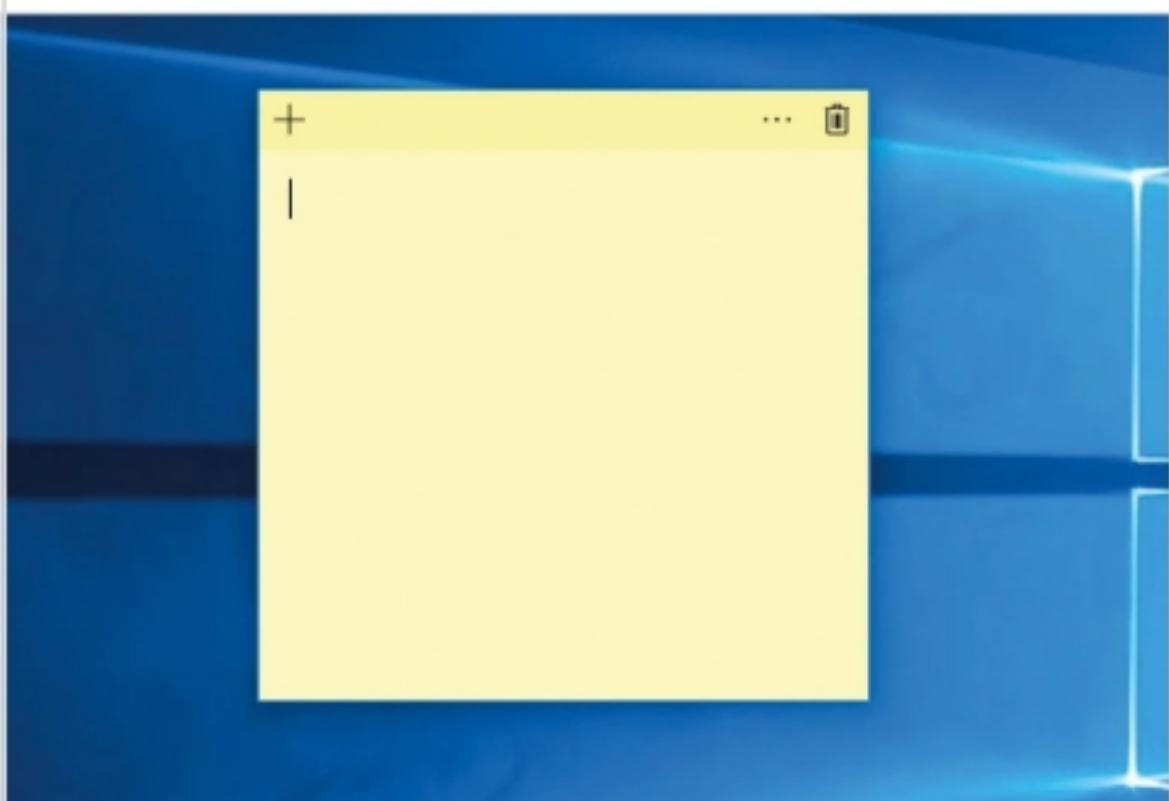
Step 4 You can resize the sticky notes, to make them slightly smaller or quite a bit larger, by moving the mouse pointer over the corner or edge until a handle icon appears and then clicking and dragging to the required size. This is useful if you don't want to scroll to see a longer note.
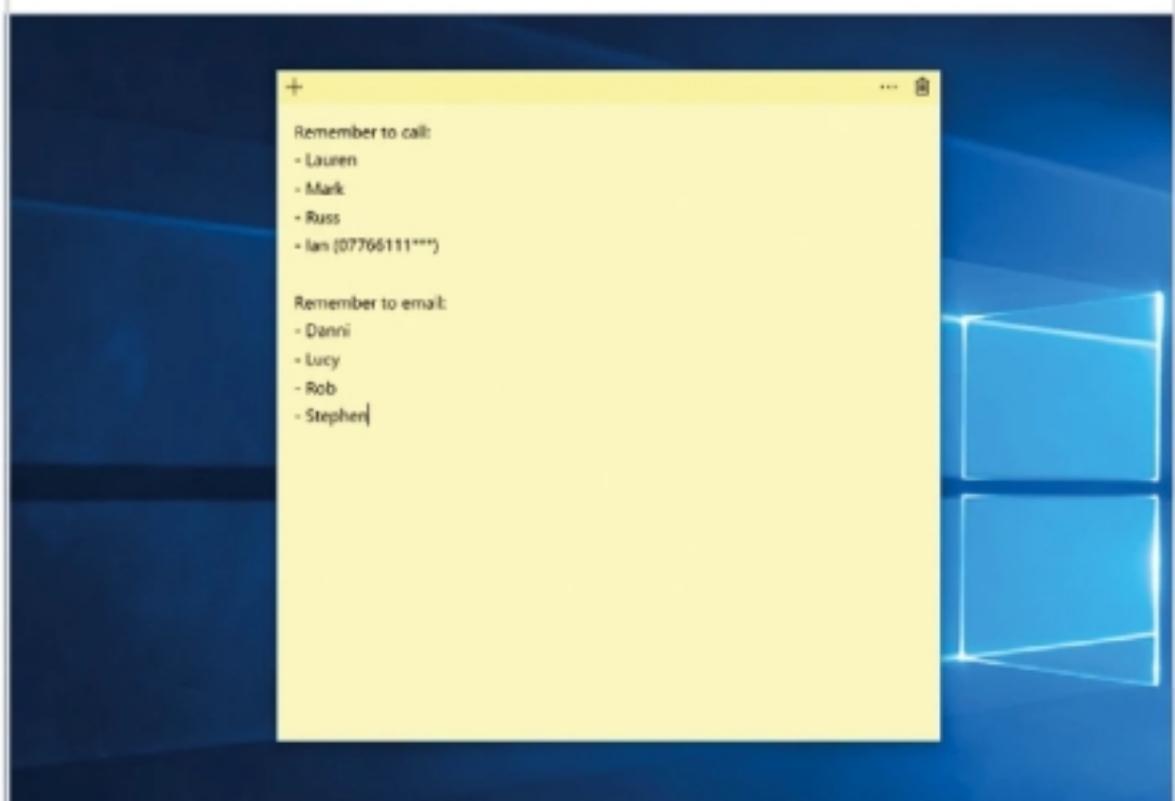
Change Your Desktop Icons

If you use desktop icons such as This PC, your personal folder or Network connections, you can change those icons. You can even download complete icon packs online, giving your desktop a completely different feel.

Step 1 Open the Personalisation screen of the Settings menu and select Themes from the sidebar menu. You now need to look for the Related Settings option. In the Related Settings section, click on the link to Desktop icon settings.


Step 2 The window that now opens lets you choose which default icons appear on your desktop. The Recycle Bin is just about essential but the others, including Computer, Users Files, Network and Control Panel icons are optional.

Step 3 If you wish to do so, it is possible to choose different icons for these system tools and you can even download custom icons online. To change the appearance of the desktop icons, click on the icon you want to change and then click the Change Icon button.
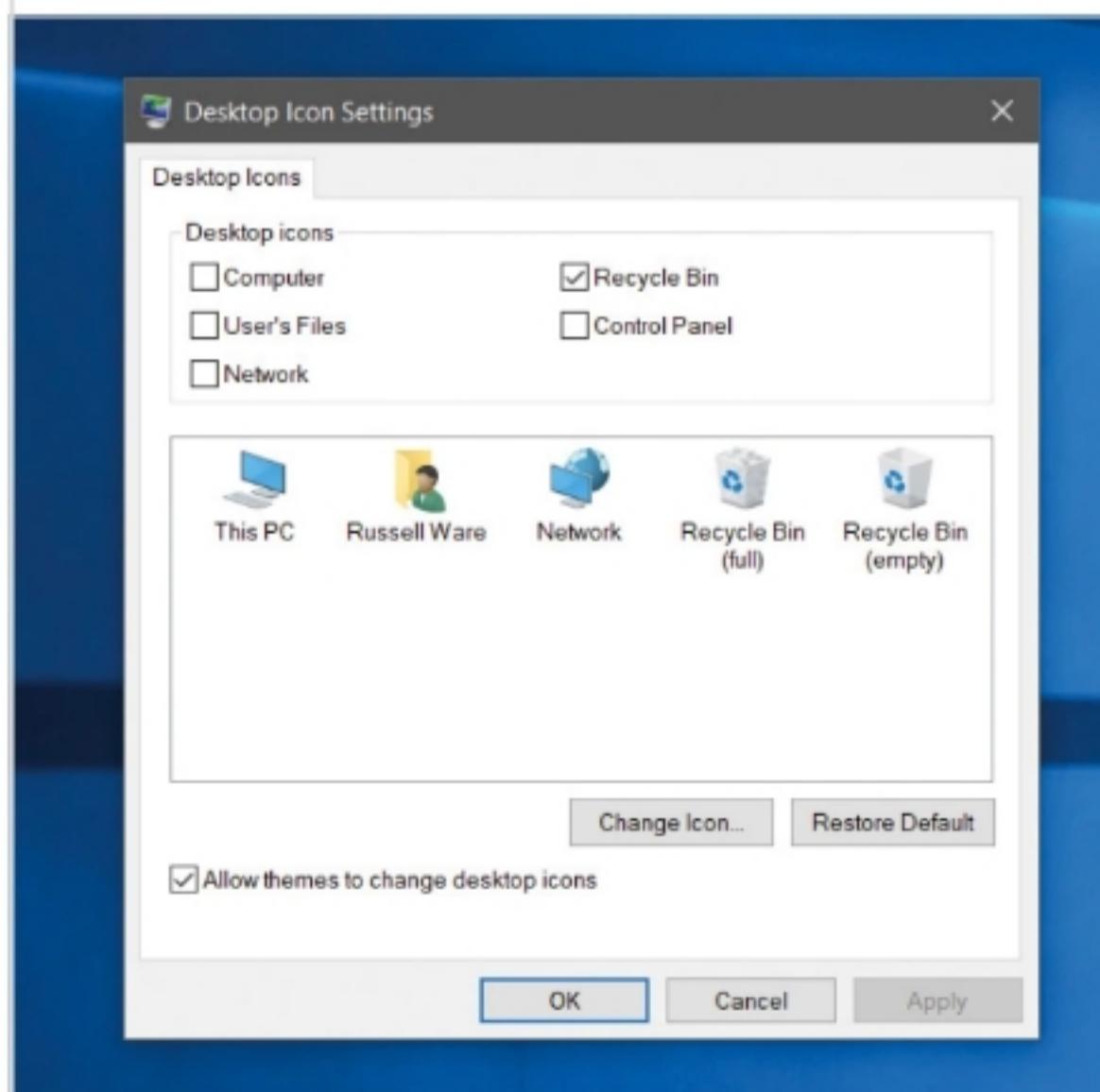
Step 4 The icon chooser window that appears will look very familiar to veteran Windows users, since it's essentially unchanged from Windows 98. Scroll through the gallery until you find an icon you like or use the Browse button to navigate to any icon pack you've downloaded.
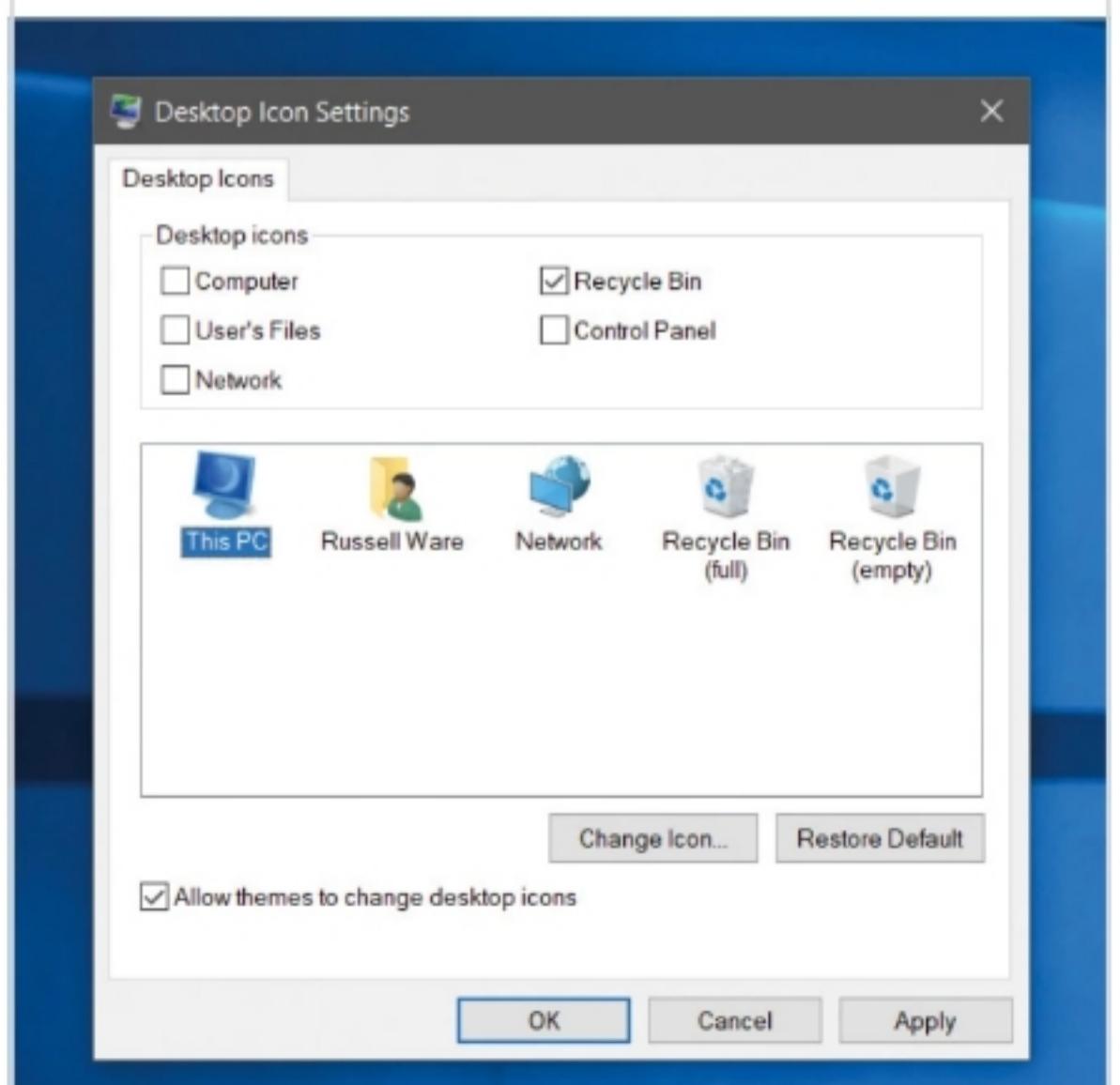
Applying a Theme

A theme can spice up your desktop significantly, adding animations, custom icons and mouse pointers. Here's how to apply a desktop theme.

Step 1 Once a theme is downloaded, you may need to open it to activate it. You can do this directly from the download interface that appears at the bottom of the browser window (showing download progress) or you can go to your Downloads folder, right-click on the file and click Open.


Step 2 The theme will then be applied, and the first desktop wallpaper in the sequence will appear on your screen. Any colour profile changes will also be applied. If you want to manage the theme settings, head to Settings > Personalisation > Themes > Theme Settings.

Step 3 Themes downloaded from the Windows Store won't need to be activated in this way. You can just click the Get button on the theme page in the store and then view the theme in settings > personalisation > themes. You can switch between themes here just by clicking the thumbnail.
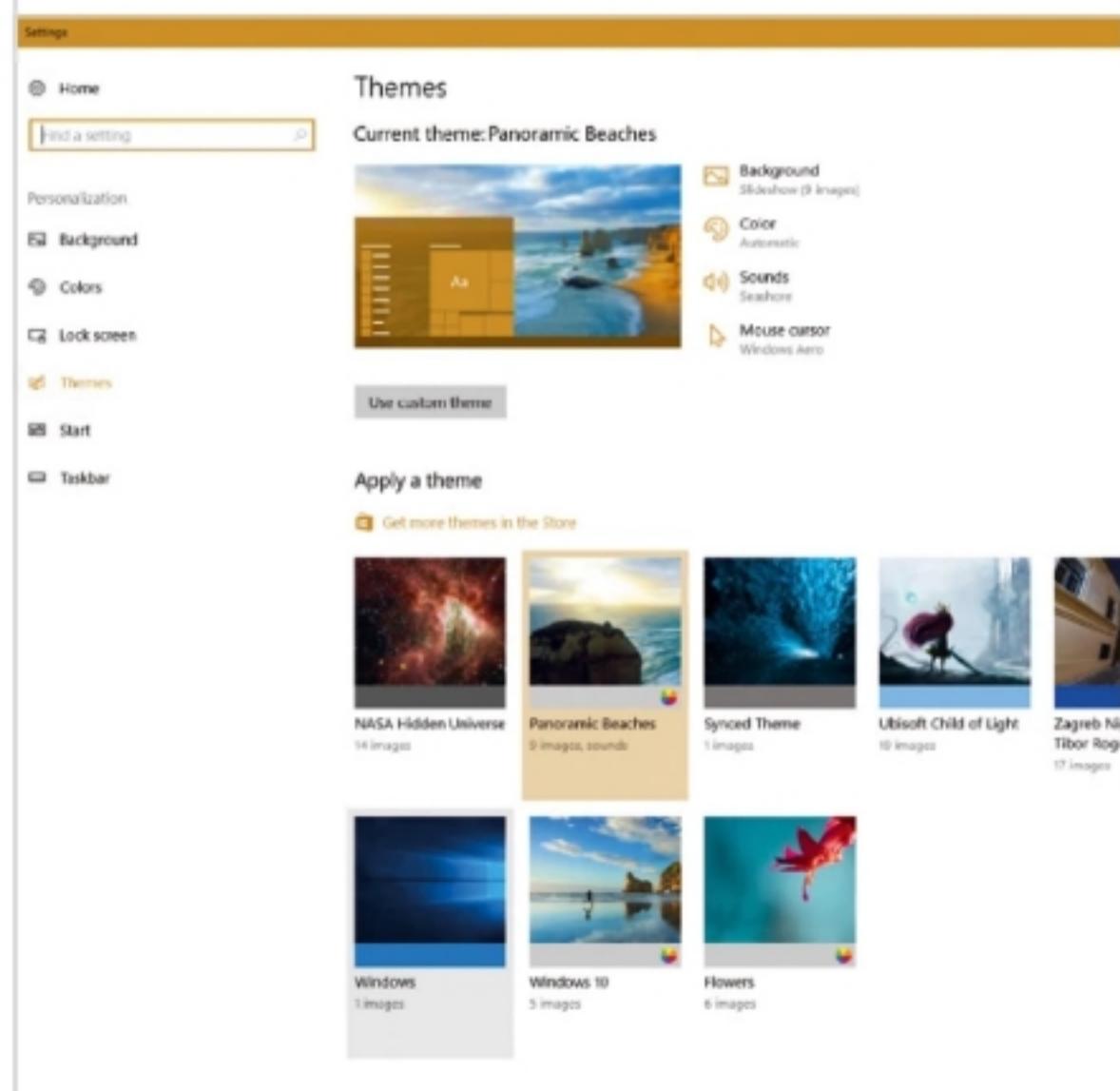
Step 4 Each theme applied can be customised further using the options in the Themes section. You can alter the background, colour, sounds and even the mouse cursor of any theme, making it completely unique to you. When you have chosen the changes, you will need to click Save Theme.
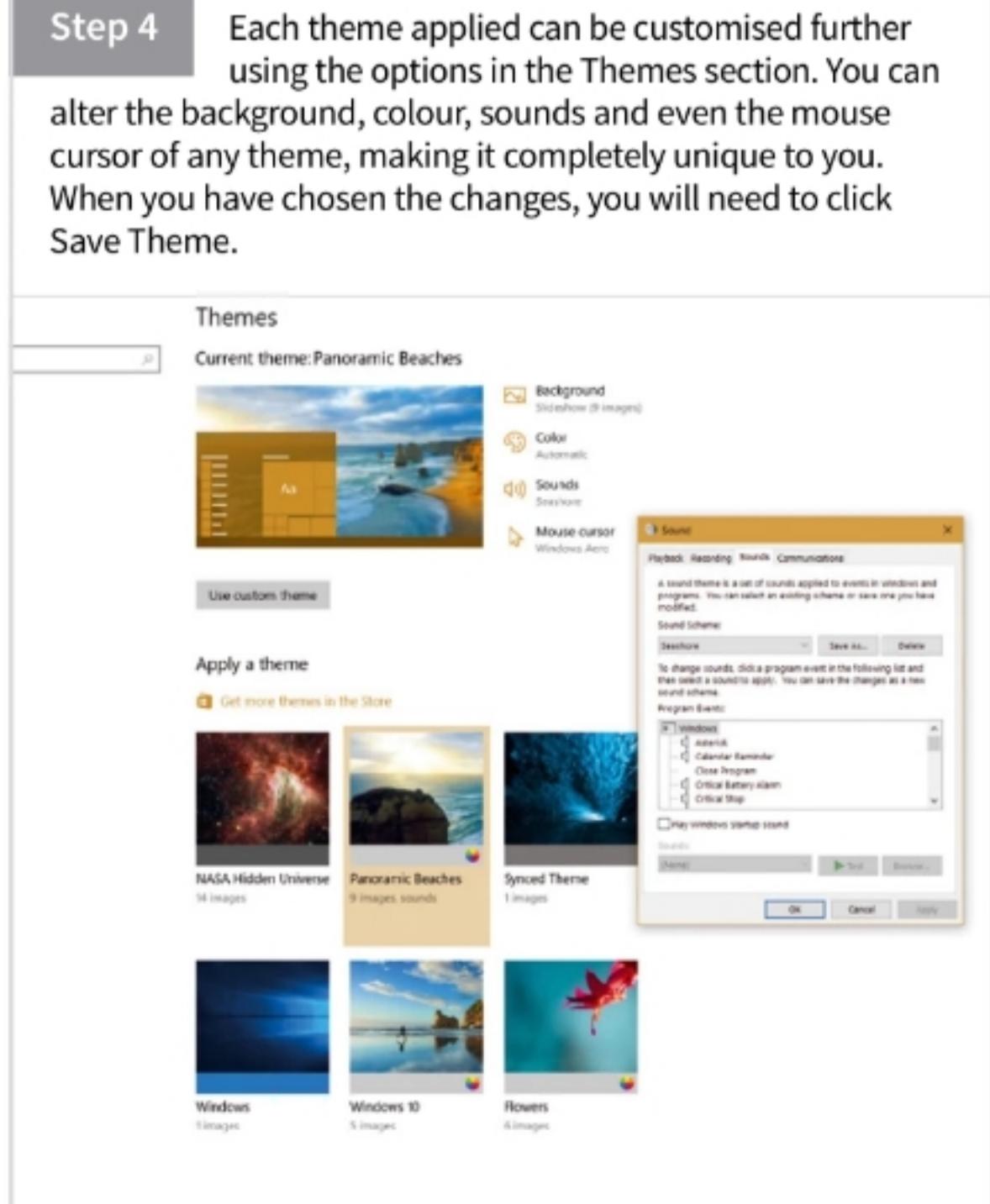
Disable the Lock Screen

There is no setting to disable the lock screen completely but it is still possible to do by delving into the Registry. This is fairly advanced customisation, so approach with care.

Step 1 To access the Registry, press the Windows Key + R, enter regedit, and then click OK. With the Registry open, navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\ SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\. Right-click the final Windows folder and click New > Key.
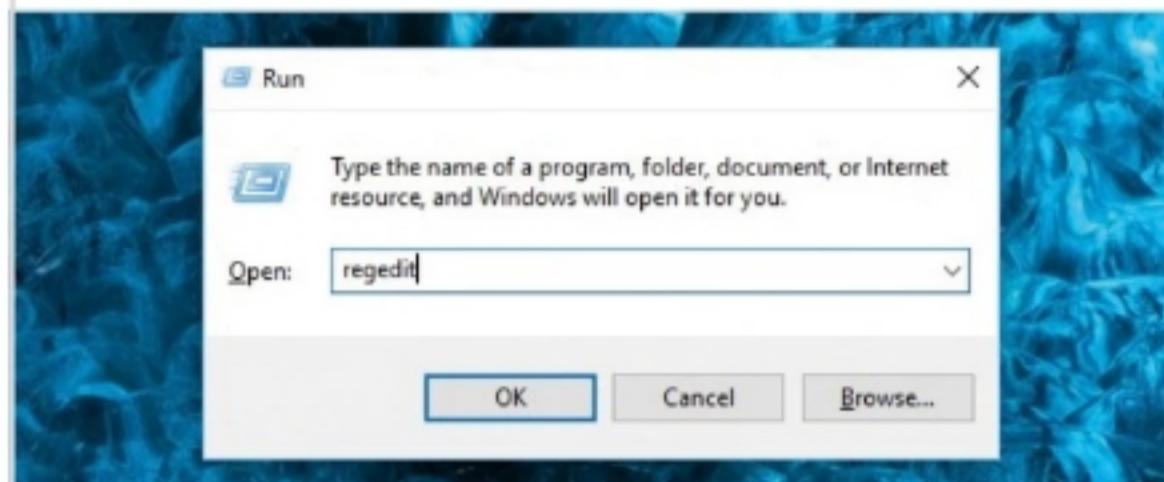
Step 2 Name this new key "Personalisation" and then navigate inside it. Right-click inside the right-hand pane and select New > DWORD (32-bit) Value. Name it "NoLockScreen". Then double click this new value and change the Value data to 1. Then click OK and exit the Registry Editor.
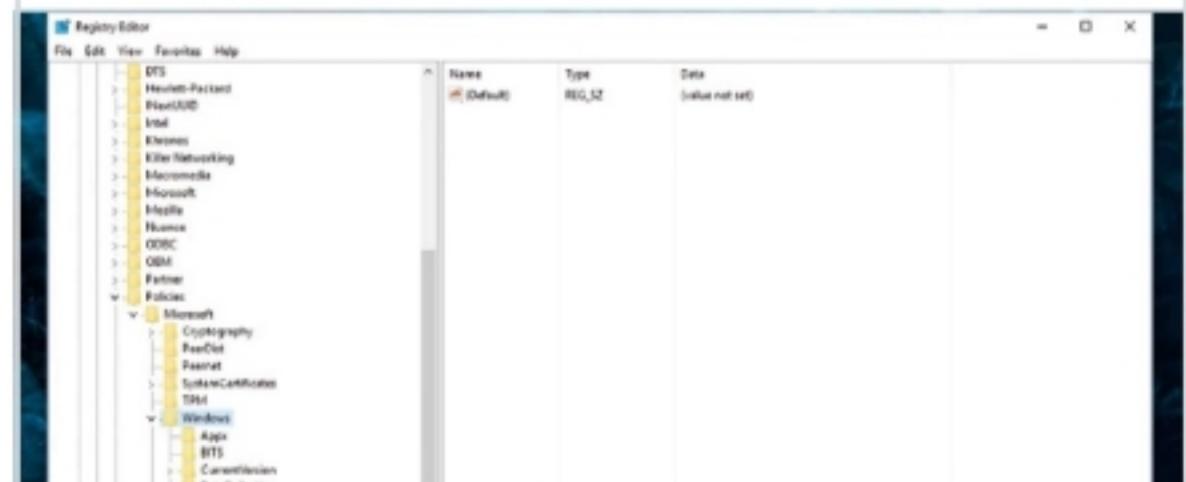
Adding New Themes

Themes can be added from a variety of sources but the best place to find them initially is the official theme page from Microsoft, or from the Windows 10 Store.

Step 1 You can access the current theme page in a couple of different ways. You can open the web browser and navigate to www.support.microsoft.com/en-gb/ themes, or Google "Windows 10 themes". Alternatively, open Settings > Personalisation > Themes and click 'Get more themes in the store'.
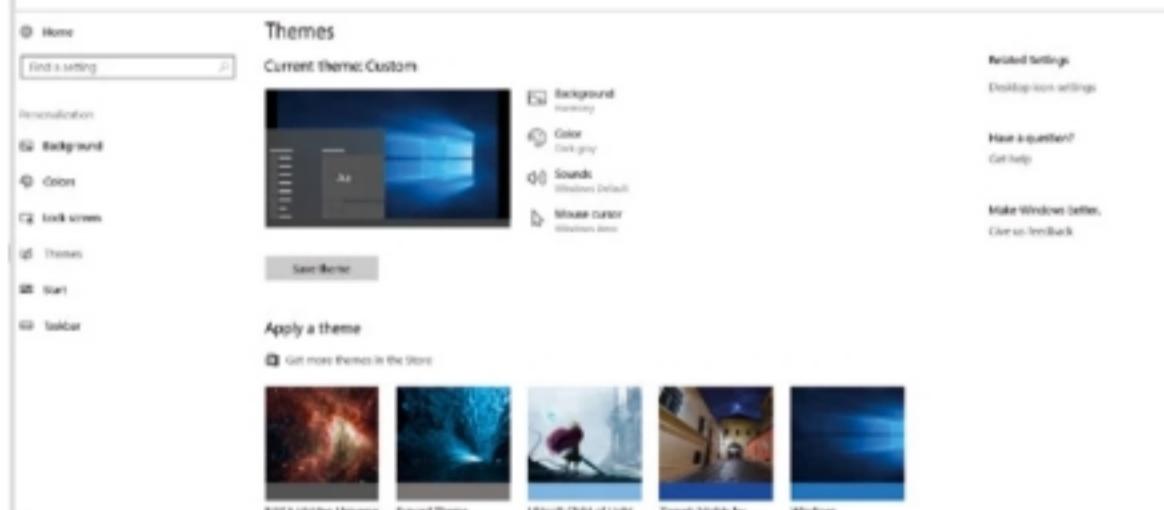
Step 3 Each theme is displayed with a thumbnail and the number of images supplied shown. The Microsoft theme page doesn't allow you to view all of these images before you download, you just have to base your choice on the title and thumbnail. Click Download on any you like the look of.
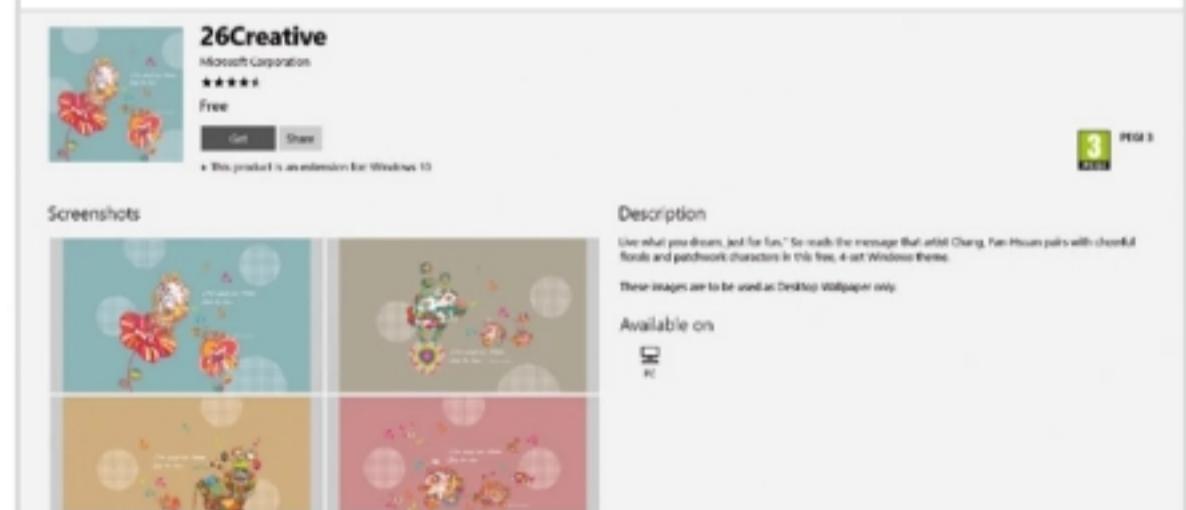
Step 2 All of these actions should bring you to the same themes page. Be aware that all themes here will soon be moved into the Windows Store app. Themes are listed in a variety of categories down the side of the page, ranging from Featured Themes, to themes with custom sounds supplied.
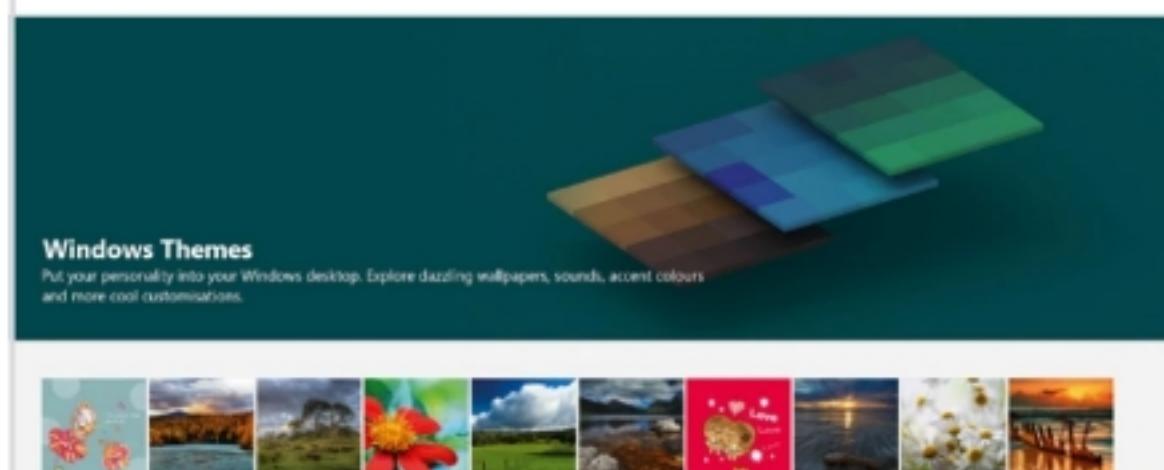
Step 4 Different themes will contain different amounts of content. Some might only have a colour profile and a few desktop wallpapers; others might contain icons, colours, wallpapers and sounds. Even the simplest of themes is likely to be more than just changing the desktop wallpaper.
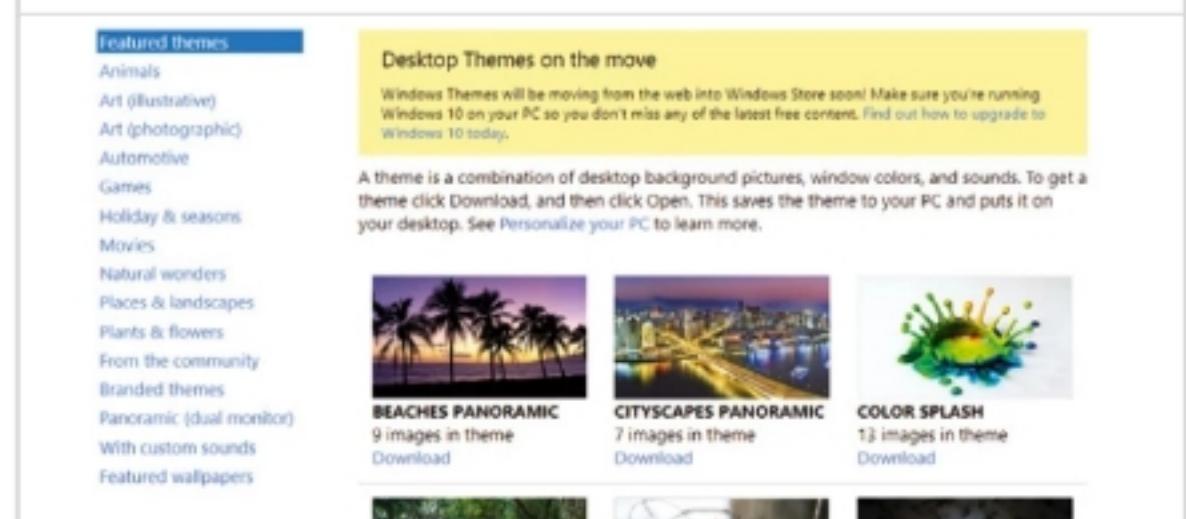
Lock Screen Customisation

The lock screen can feature custom backgrounds with Spotlight Images, display app statuses, and even give you direct access to Cortana.

Step 1 The first thing to choose is whether to display one of your own images, a slideshow of images or something from Windows Spotlight. If you choose either of the first two of these, more options will appear to select the images you want to use (single or multiple).
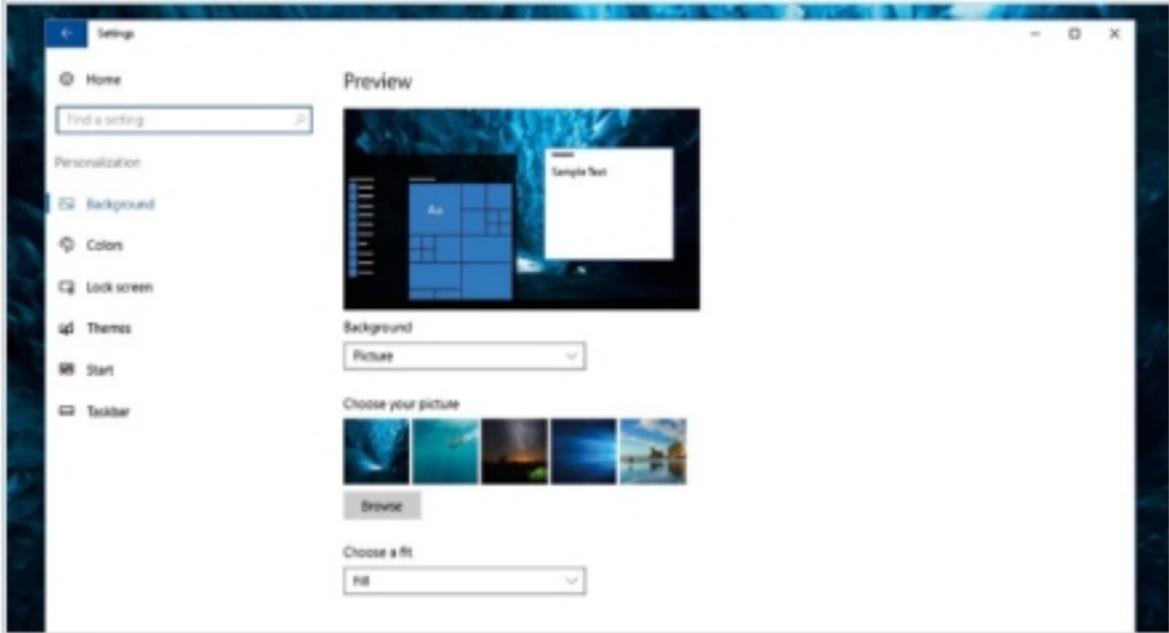

Step 2 You will see that there are two separate sections for adding apps here. The section with the single app icon is the one which will display more detailed information and the section with seven icons/spaces for adding apps which will show quick statuses.
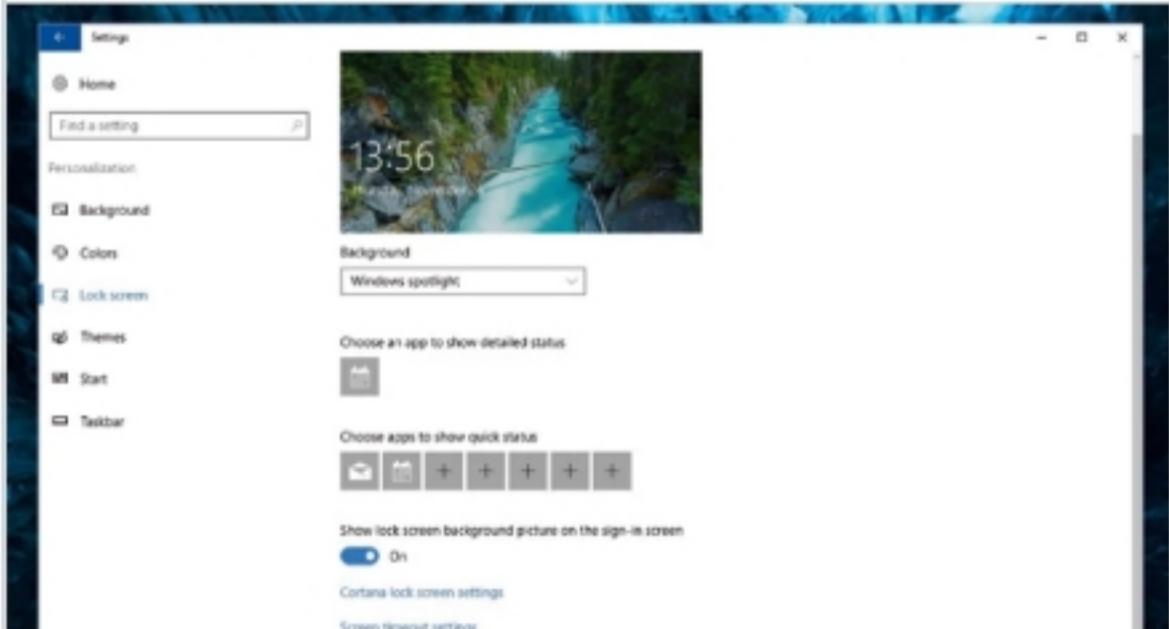
Step 3 You can add as many apps as you wish here, up to the maximum of eight. To choose which apps have statuses displayed, click on one of the spaces and choose from the pop-up menu that appears. The menu for the detailed information space will be slightly shorter than for quick statuses.
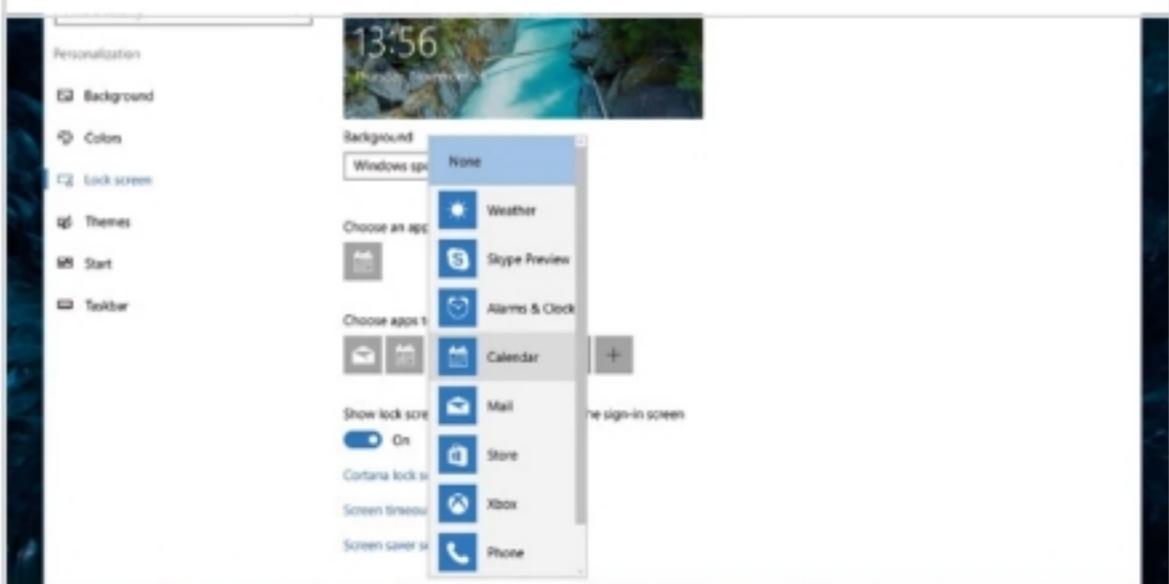
Step 4 You can check how the detailed and quick statuses are displayed on your lock screen by letting your PC sleep or by pressing the Windows Key and choosing Sleep. Be aware however, that statuses may not show up straight away for things like Messages and Email.

Step 5 There are several other lock screen customisation options here. You can choose whether to display an image on the sign-in screen as well as the main lock screen and there are direct links to Cortana settings, where you can control how Cortana works on the lock screen.
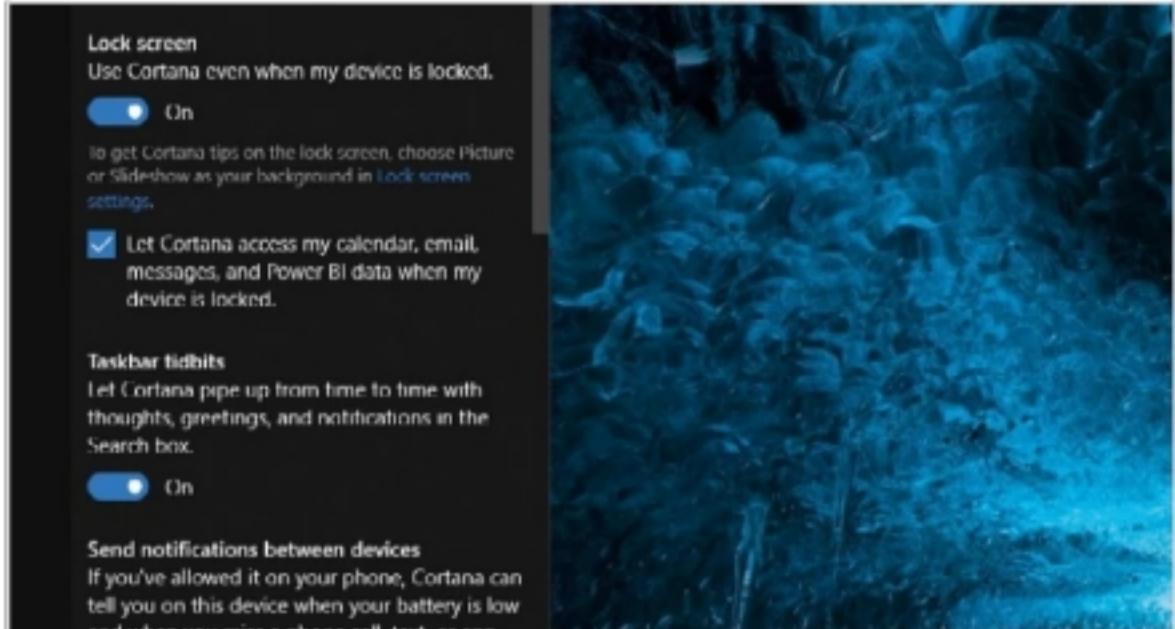

Step 6 The final two links take you to screen timeout and screen saver settings. The settings you choose there will depend on your personal preference and also on your computer location. Setting a shorter timeout means that your computer will be secure if you have to leave it.
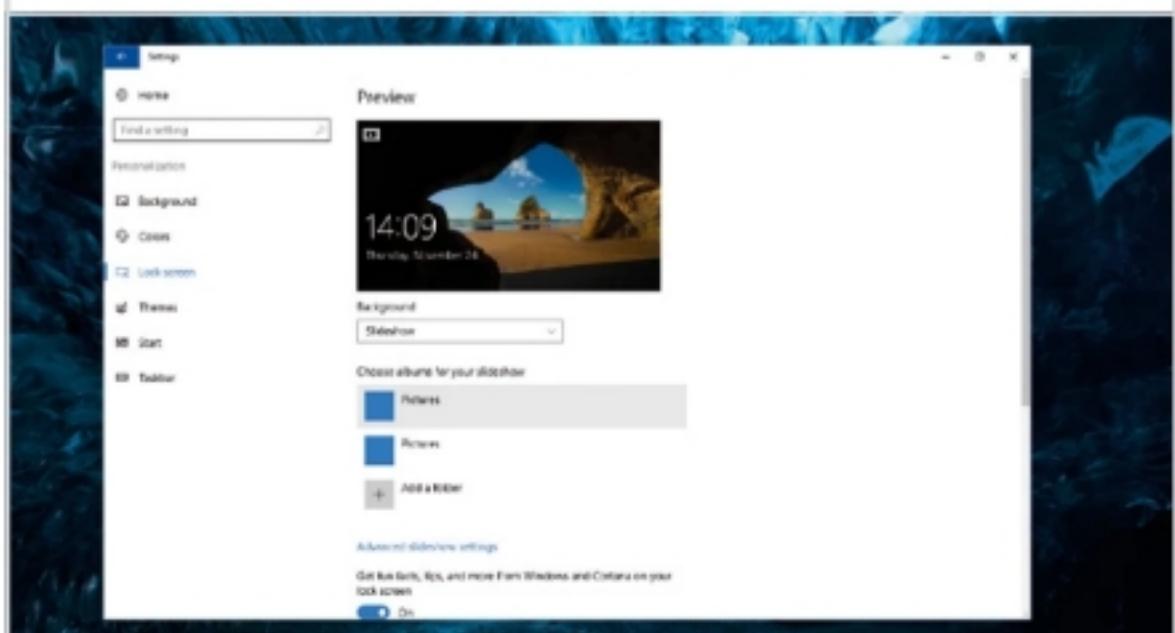
| Step 5	If you opt for Slideshow, you will see some additional options to choose from. You can set the interval for the slide show from the 'Change picture every' menu and decide how you'd like the images to fit on the screen by clicking the 'Choose a fit' menu.
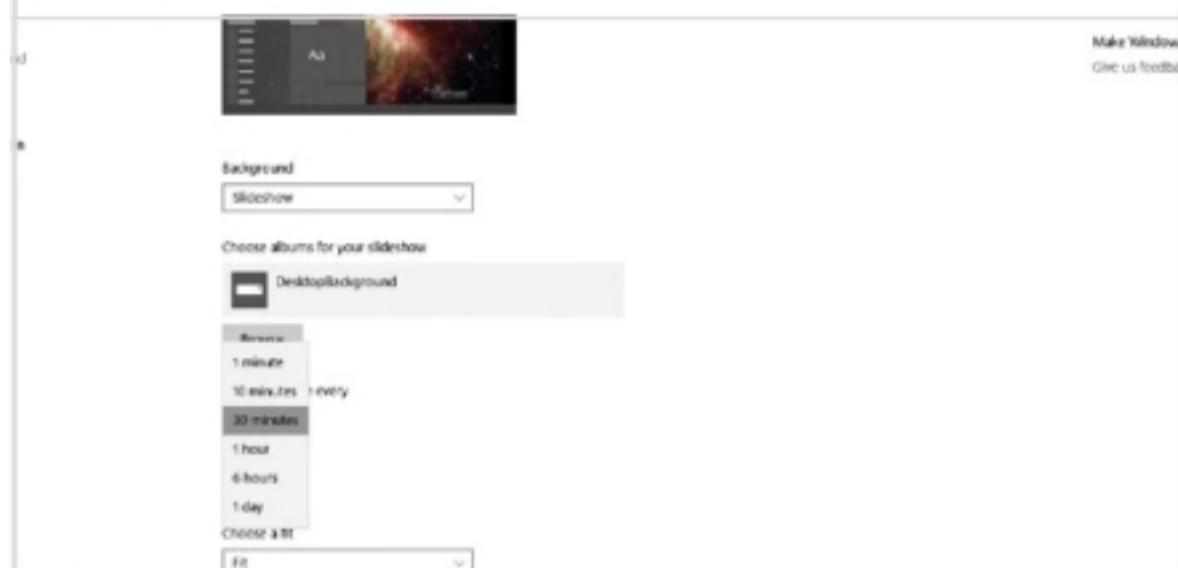
Step 6	Even if you set a background image, you can also change the colour of the actual desktop. Click on the Colours option at the bottom and choose a background colour. You can also choose a custom colour from a more detailed hexadecimal colour selector.
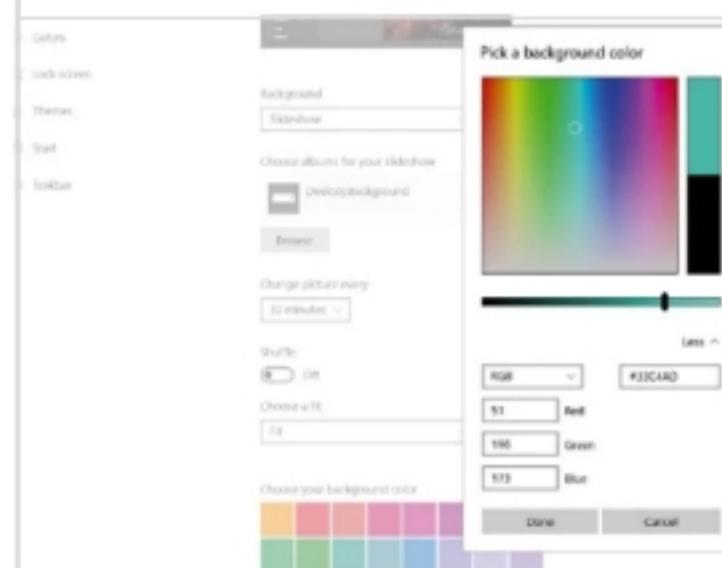
Choose Accent Colours

By accent colours we mean the colour of the taskbar, the Start menu and the frames of new windows and so on, that you open on your computer.

Step 1	Windows 10 now allows you to change the default Windows colour mode from light to dark. You can also choose custom colour mode, which will give you the option to choose light Windows and dark apps, or vice versa. Use the drop-down meu to select the mode.
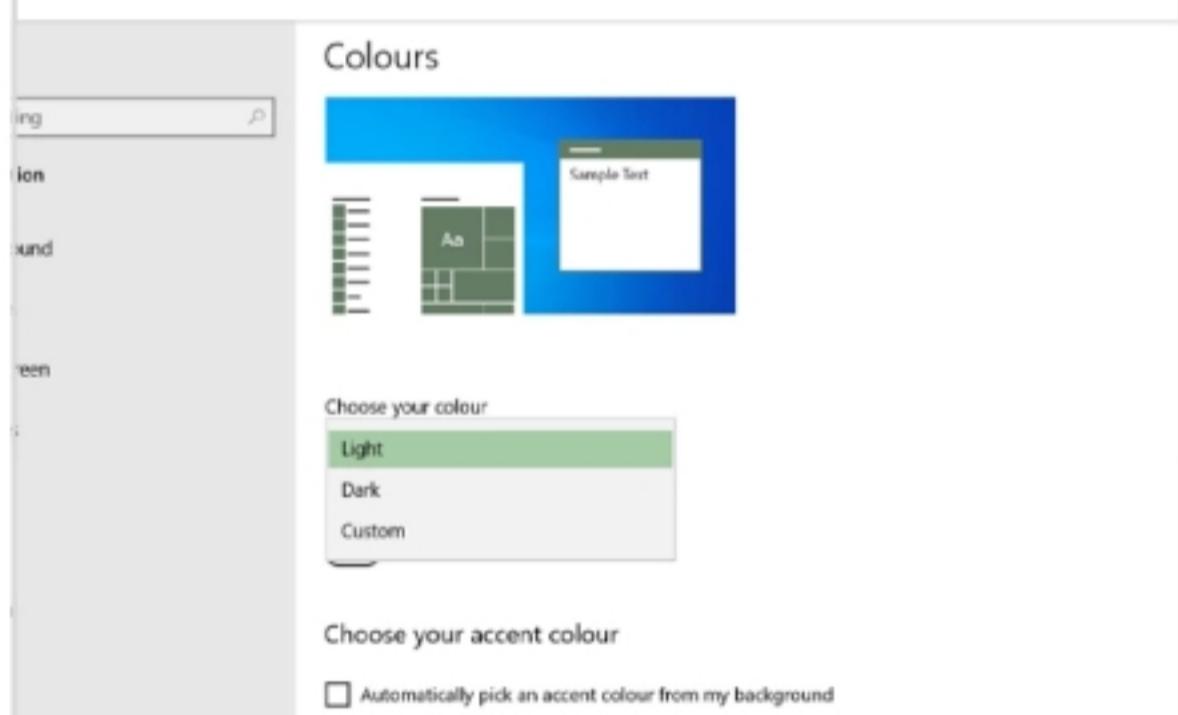
Step 3	If you prefer, you can also let Windows automatically match the accent colour to the current desktop image. This isn't a perfect solution and works best if the desktop background image you are using is predominantly one colour. To do this, just tick the checkbox.
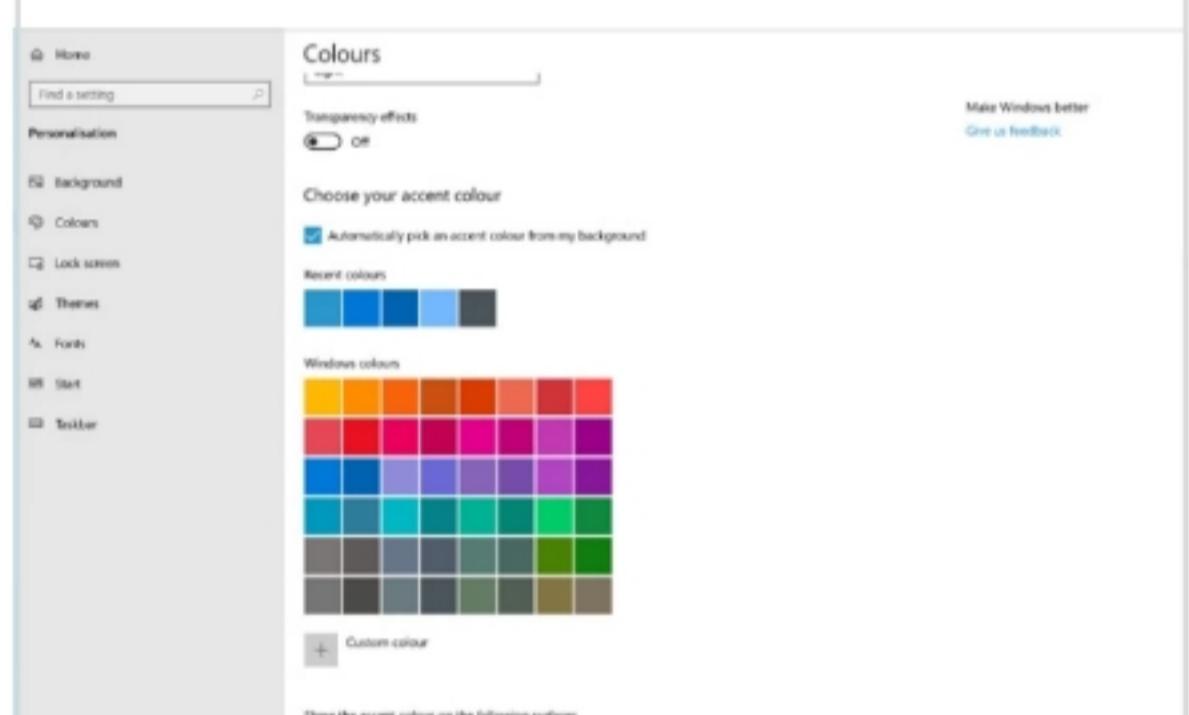
Step 2	In both light or dark mode, you can further customise how Windows 10 looks by changing accent colours. This affects things like the toolbar of open windows, the tiles in the start menu and various other accents. Just choose from the colour swatch.
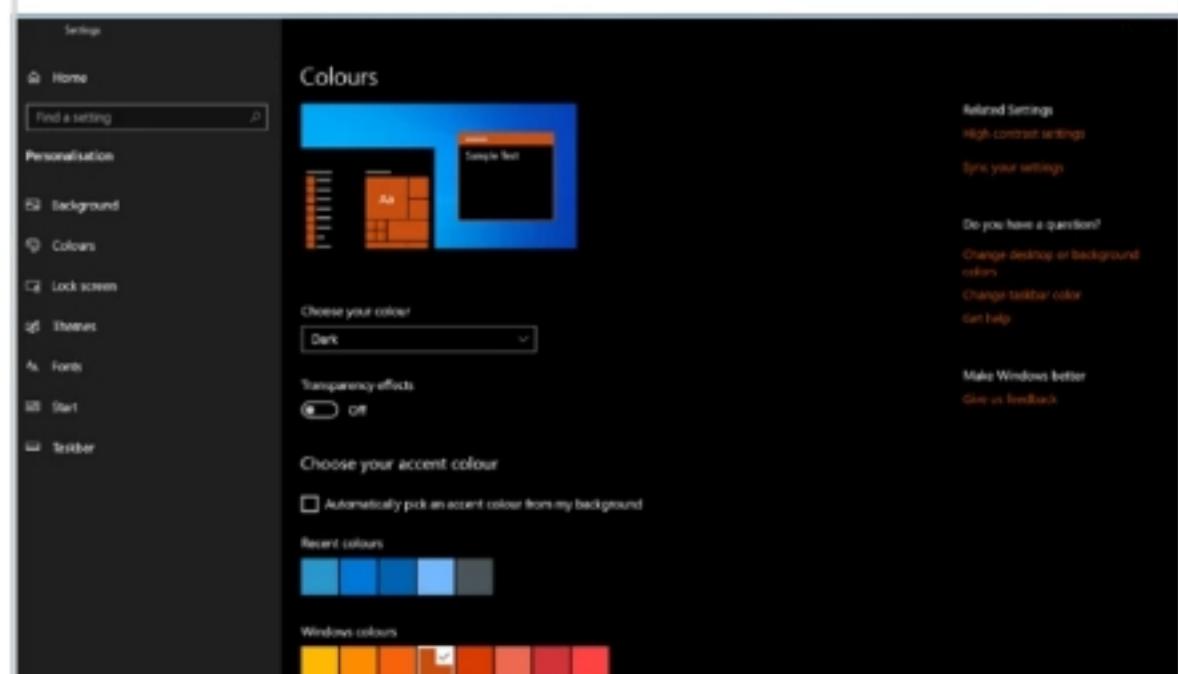
| Step 4	You can choose where your new colour accent is applied. You can set it so it changes the Start, taskbar and Action Center and the Title bars of windows. You can also pick one or the other, or a combination of all options. You can also make these elements semi-transparent.
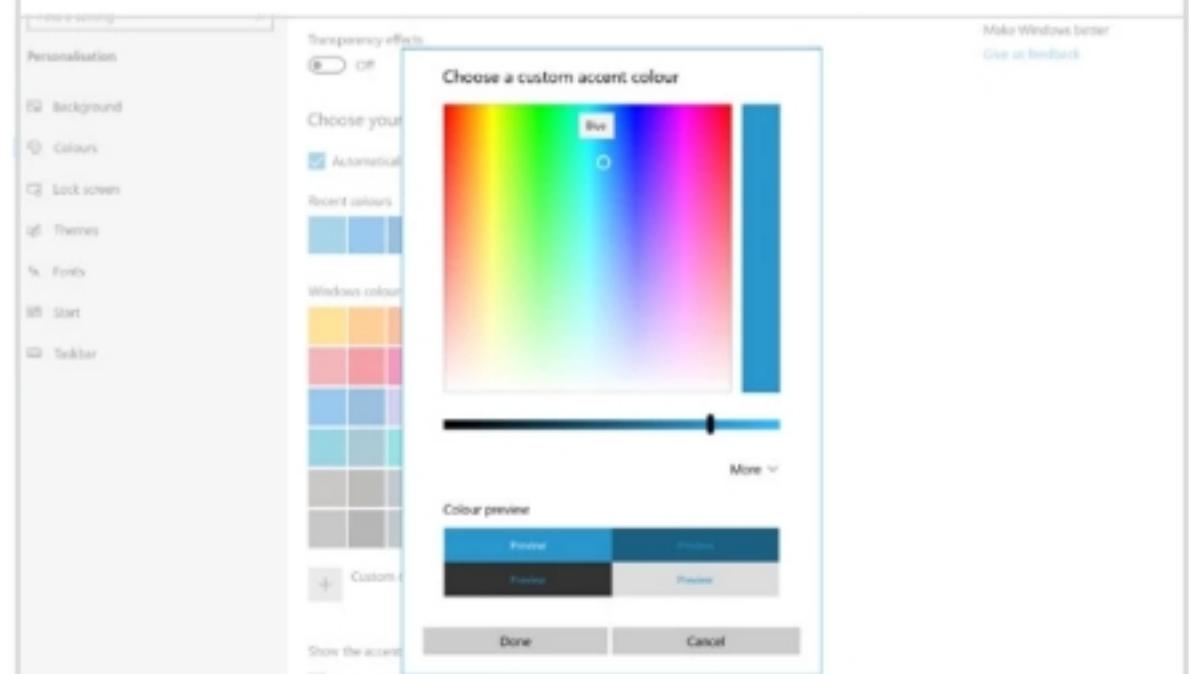
Personalise and Customise the Desktop

One of the most welcome features of Windows 10 is the return to the familiar desktop environment and there are many ways to customise it to suit your needs and tastes; including icon size, background image and colour scheme.

Change the Desktop Background

The Desktop personalisation procedure hasn't changed much since Windows 7, so if you've used that OS before this will feel very familiar.

Step 1 You can get started with personalising the Windows 10 Desktop in exactly the same way as you did with Windows 7. For anyone completely new to Windows, that means right-clicking anywhere on the Desktop screen and selecting Personalise from the action menu that appears.

Step 2 The Background settings will be displayed first by default. Click the first drop-down menu to select whether to use the default backgrounds, solid colours or choose to display folders of your own images. Your choices here changes what is displayed in the background settings.

Step 3 To select your own pictures for the background, click on the Browse button and navigate to the folder containing the images you want to use. For best results, you might need to crop some of your pictures to the same aspect ratio, i.e. widescreen, as your monitor screen.
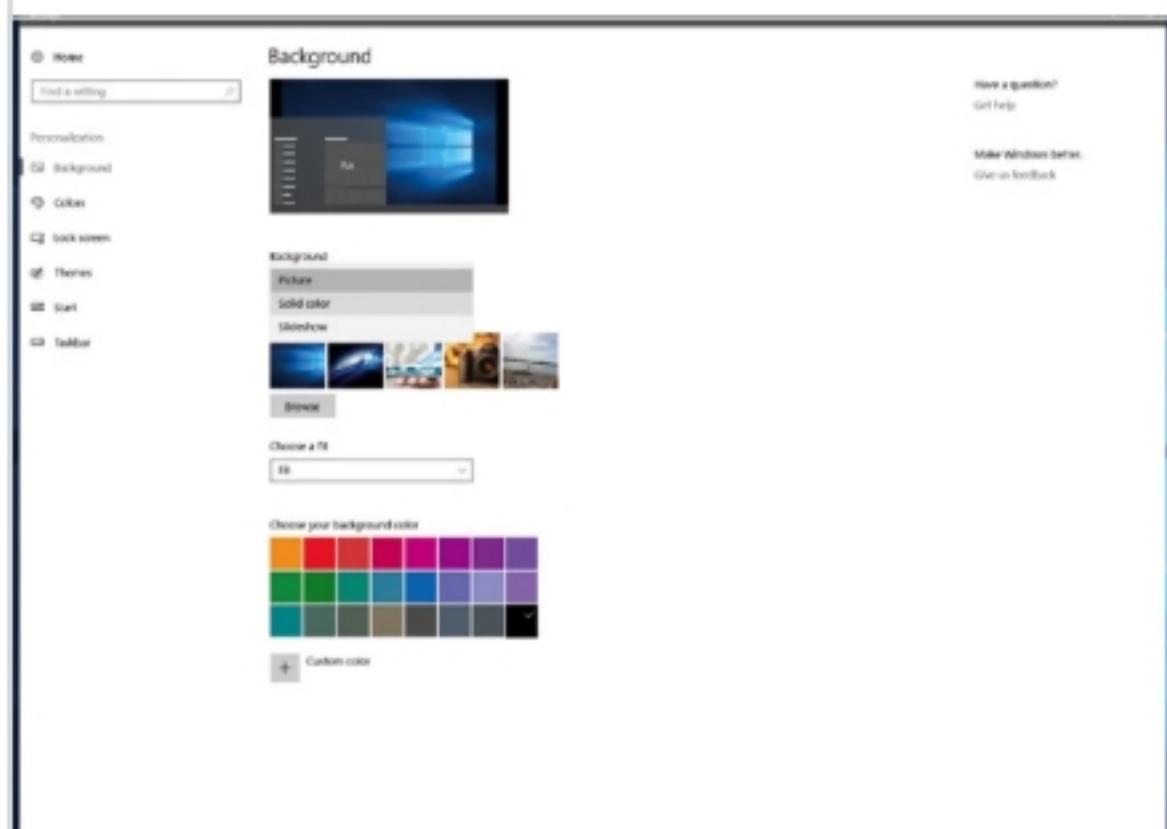
Step 4 To set a picture as your Desktop background, simply click on it. It will instantly be set as your new Desktop background image (a preview will display). The screen shows you the last five images used or you can click the Browse button to choose a new one from your folders.
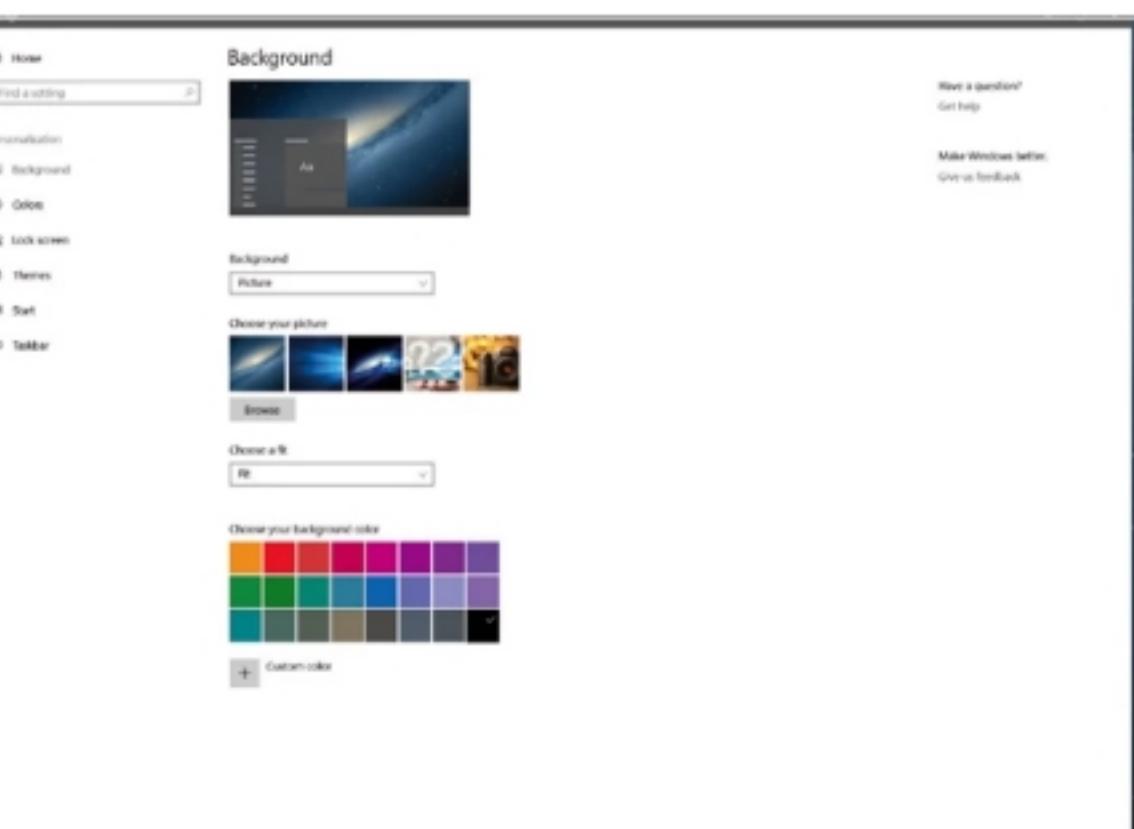
Step 5   You can open the original (but updated) People app either through the People panel on the taskbar, or by clicking on it in the main apps list in the Start menu. To add a new contact manually to the People app, click on the People button, select the More button and then New Contact.
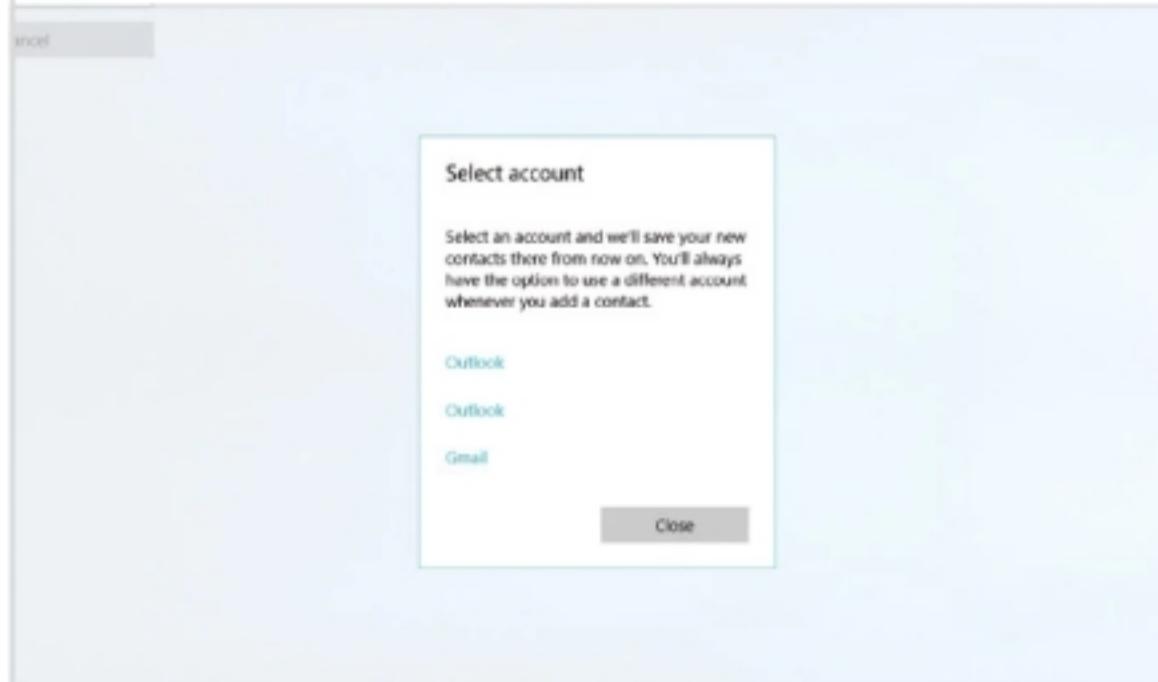

Step 6   The main app will open in a new window and you will be asked to choose and account to save the contact to: usually Outlook but can also include things like Gmail accounts, if you use one. You can then enter the name, phone number and any other contact details in the fields provided.
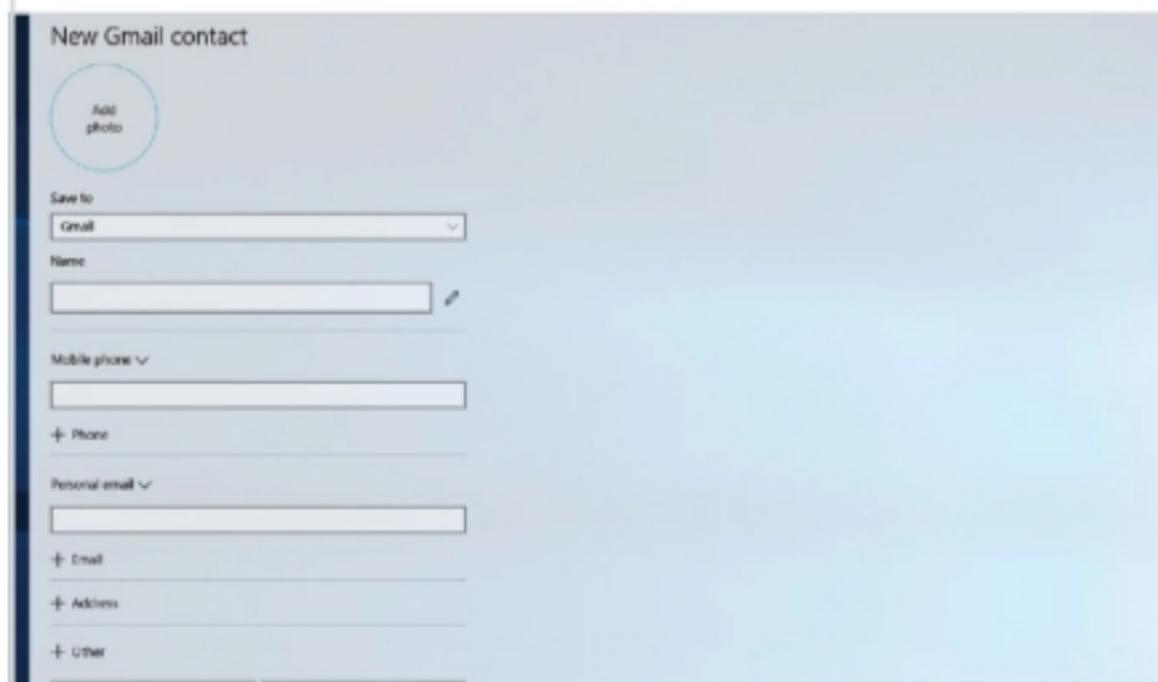
Step 7   You can add a photo to your contacts, just like on a smartphone, if you have one to hand. Click the Add photo circle on the new contact creation screen and navigate to the photo you want to use. The default photo selection is the Photos app but you can browser to any folder you want.
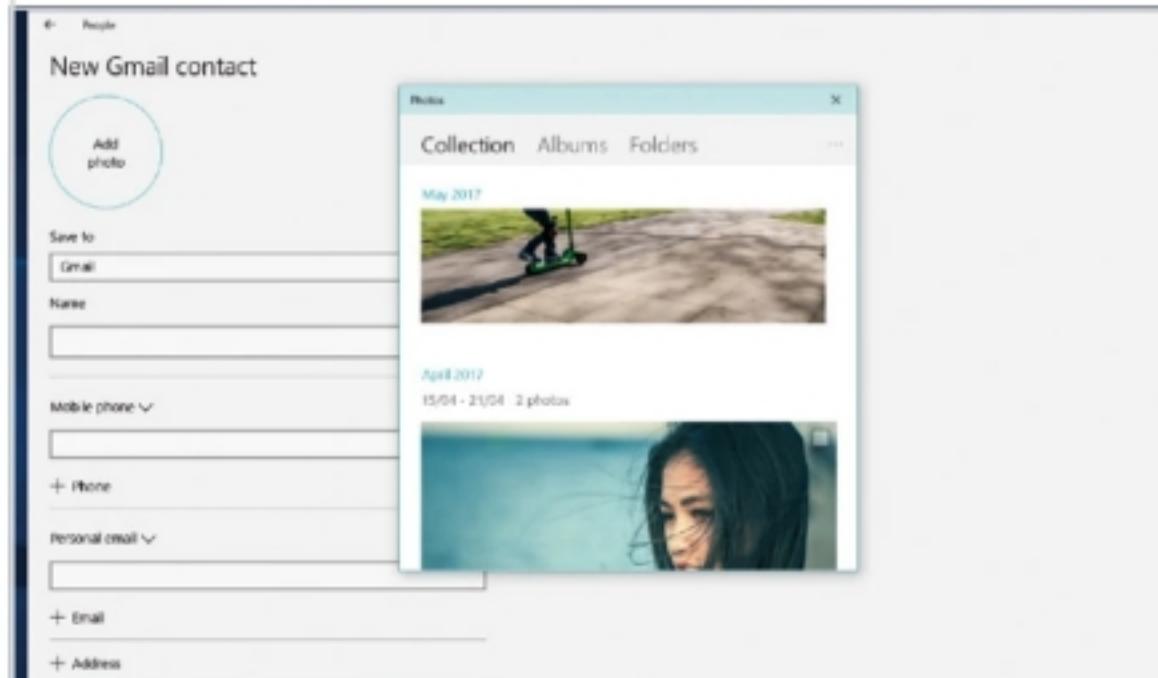
Step 8   The new People app allows you to pin a number of contacts to the right side of the taskbar for quick access. Click the People button and then click "Find and pin contacts". A list of your contacts will appear in the panel. Scroll down until you find the contact you want to pin.
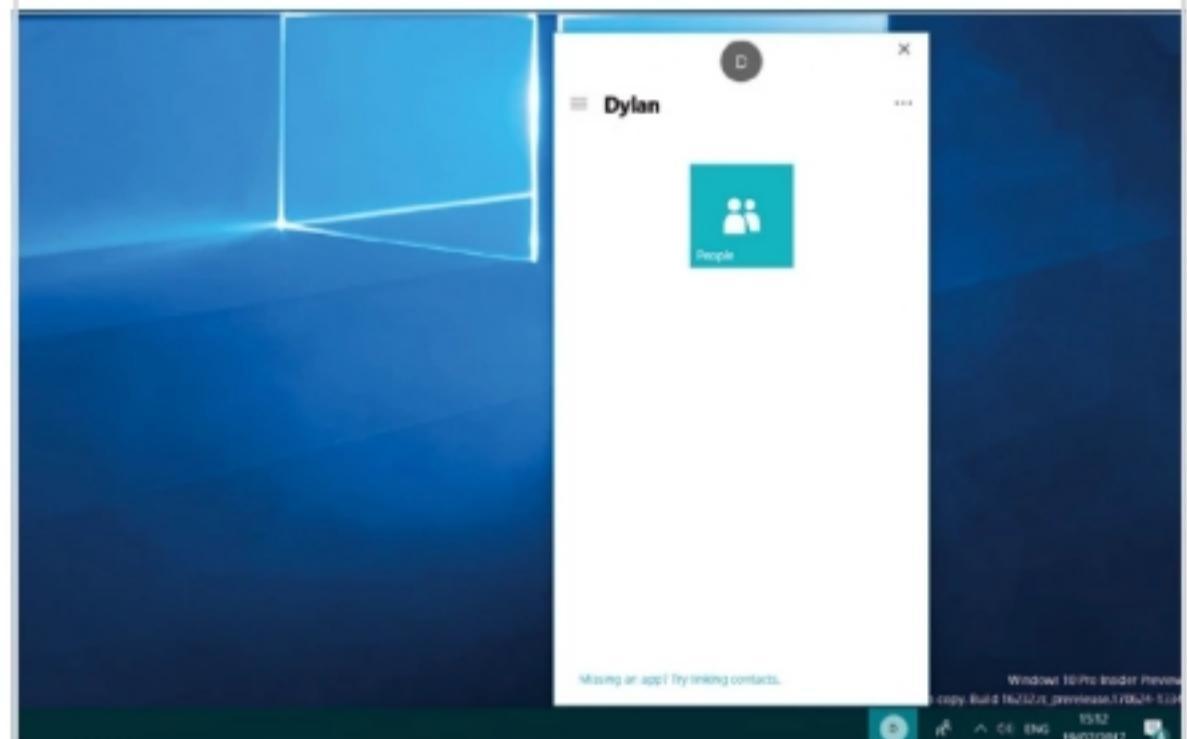
Step 9   Click on the contact to pin it to the taskbar. A separate window will also open, showing you the contact details. This is the windows that will open each time you click on a pinned contact. A well as the contact details, it also contains links to the main app, and options for unpinning.
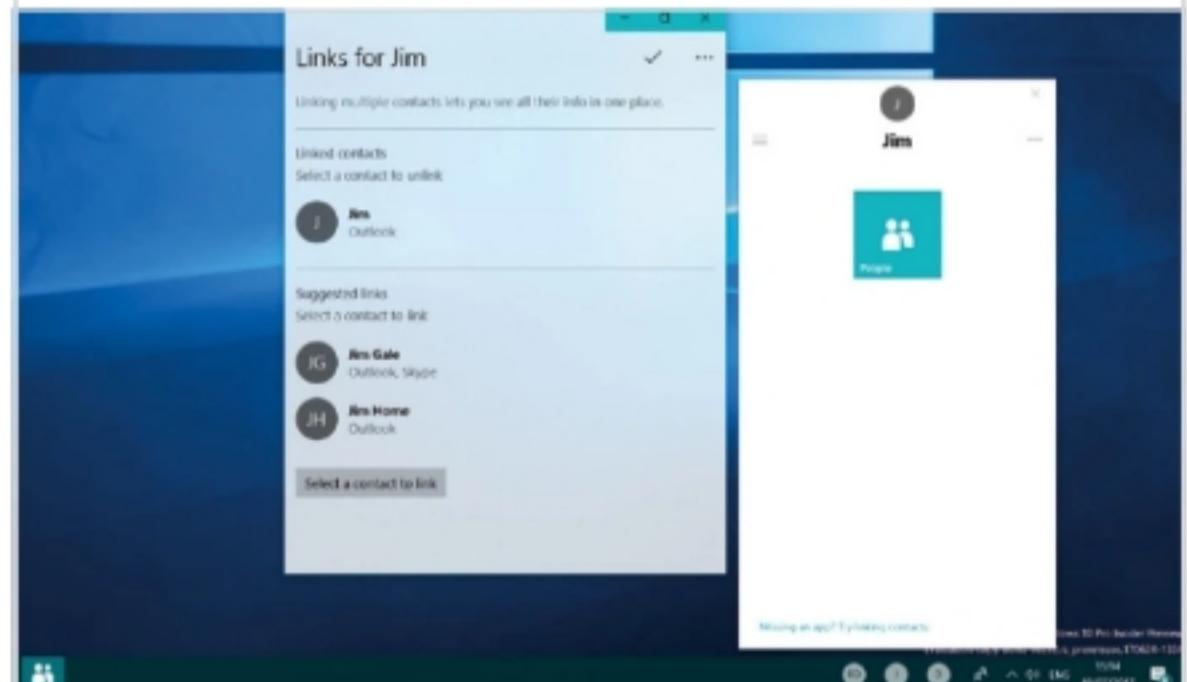
Step 10   Shoulder Taps are notifications from contacts, from apps like Skype, that animate in the taskbar. To enable Shoulder Taps, go to Settings > Personalisation > Taskbar and scroll down to People. You can enable or disable Shoulder Taps and enable or disable Shoulder Tap sounds here.
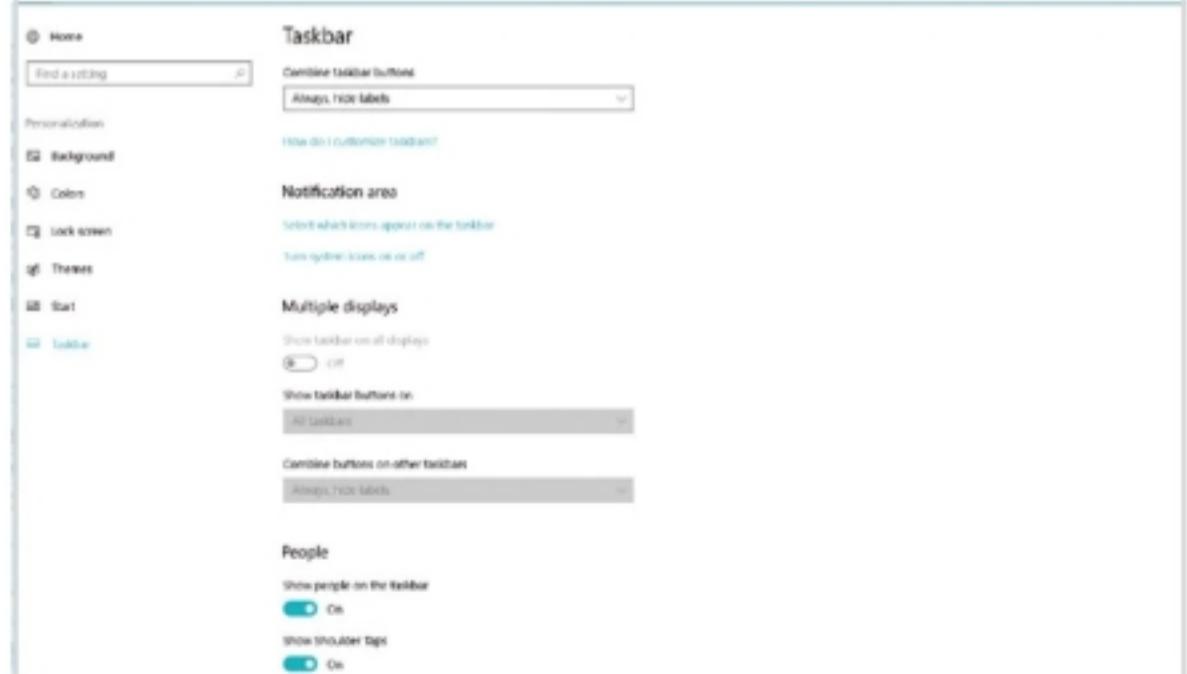
Manage Your Contacts in Windows 10

The People app has been a part of Windows 10 for some time but in the more recent update to the OS, it has had an overhaul. New features have been added, along with a brand new taskbar icon. Let's take a look at this excellent way of keeping track of your contacts.

The New People Button

If you can't see the People button in the taskbar, and can't activate it in the action menu, you may be running an older version of Windows 10. Check your available updates.

Step 1 After the newest Creators update has installed, you will see a small people icon on the right-hand side of the taskbar. If you don't see the icon (it looks like two people, one standing behind the other), right-click on the taskbar and select "Show the People Button" from the action menu.

Step 2 Click on the button and a new People panel will open. Click on the Get started button at the bottom of the new panel. Now click on the Apps tab. This will show you a list of apps that the people app is currently pulling contact information from. It may include apps such as Skype and Mail.

Step 3 You may need to connect the apps before People will start checking for contacts. If an app is not already connected, but is available to be, it will have a link next to it: Click to connect this app. The app in question will open and it will be linked to People. Any new contacts in the app will be added.
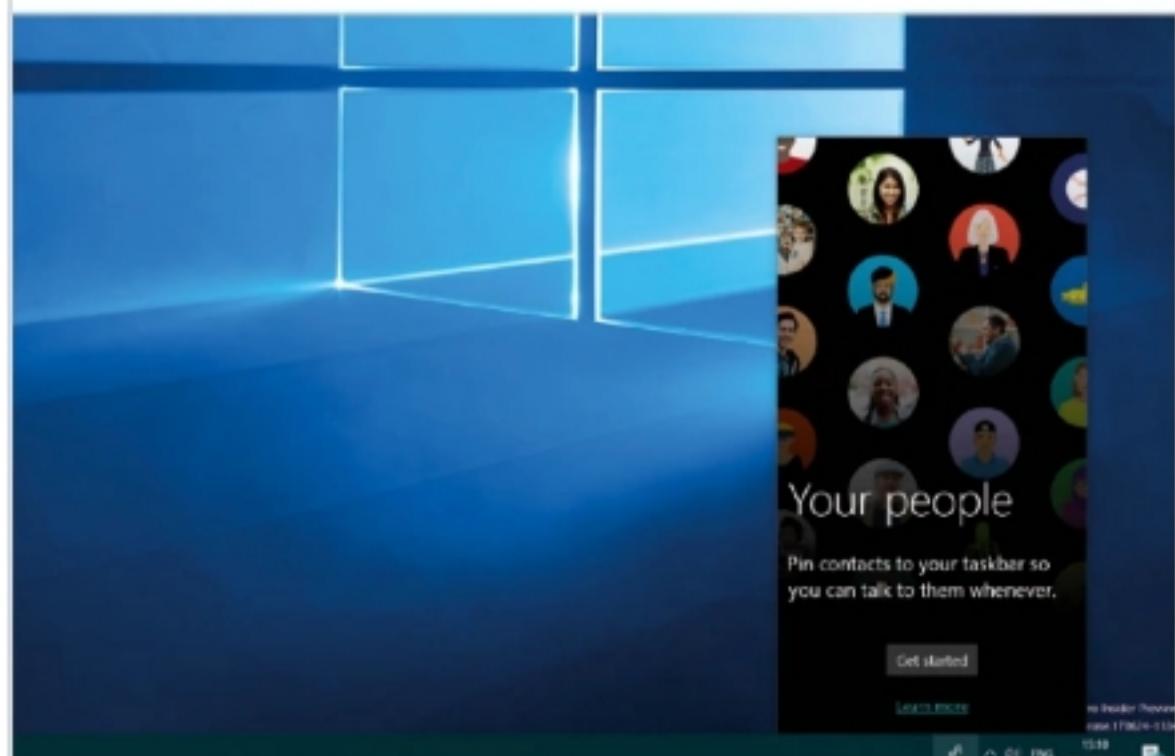
Step 4 The People tab in the panel will eventually show a list of regular contacts, or people you have Shoulder Tapped (or who have Shoulder Tapped you). Right now it will probably be empty and you can't manually add people to this panel; although this option may be added in the future.
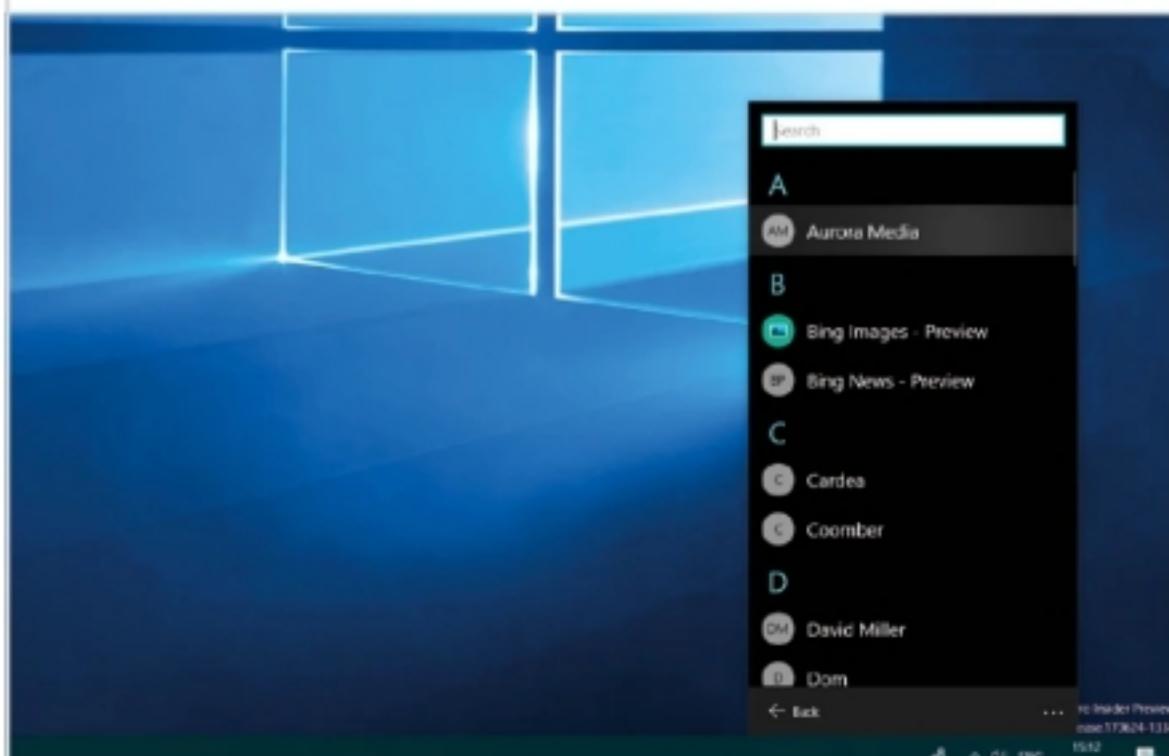
Planning a Route

Maps is great for checking out an area, looking around a city or just finding businesses local to you. It is also great for planning detailed routes.

Step 1 To start planning a route, click the Directions tab at the top left of the Maps window. A small panel opens with boxes for your starting and ending location. You can either type a destination or you can choose one from the list that appears below the box when you click on it.
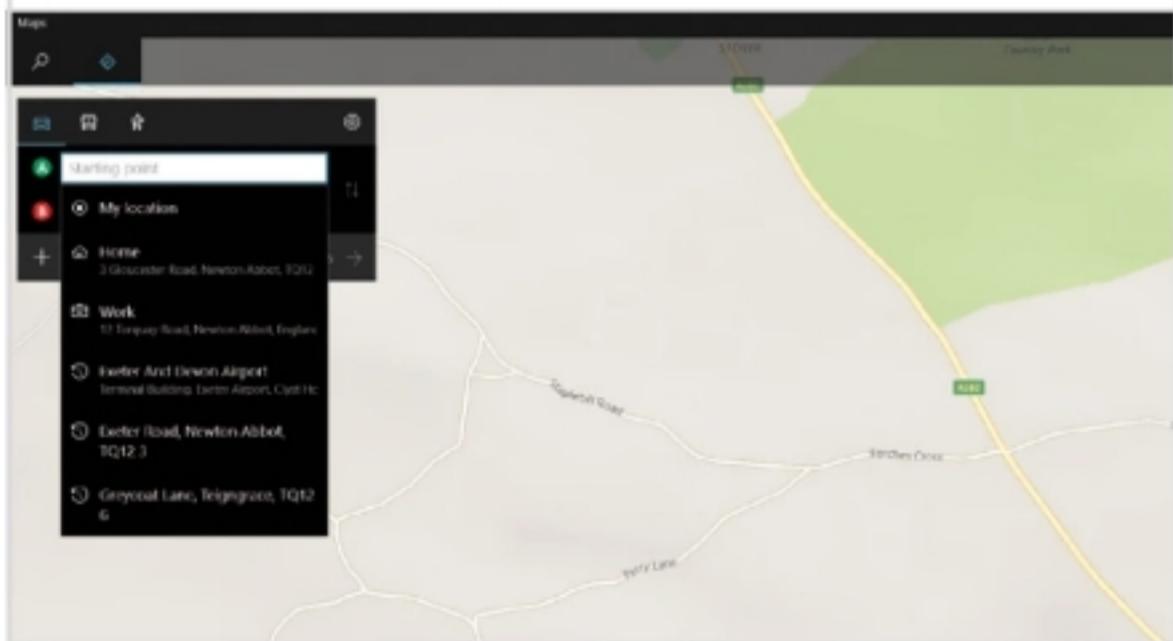

Step 2 If you need to make detours or multiple stops along your route, you can click the + button to add more destination boxes. Each one can have a destination in it, making up your complete route. When you view directions, each of the destinations you added is marked with a relevant letter.
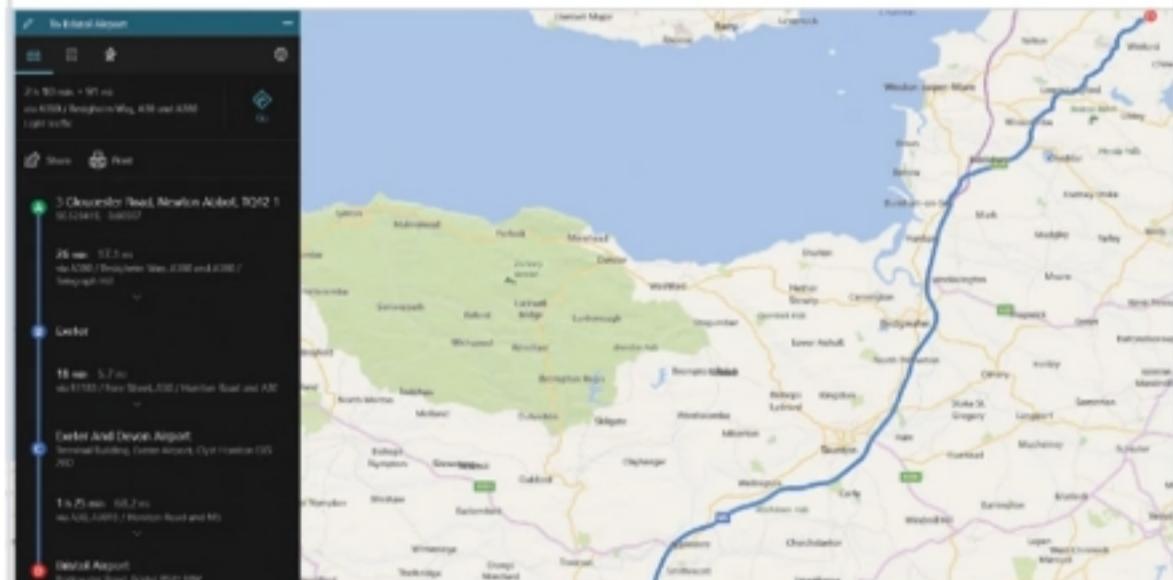
Step 3 Routes vary depending on whether you are driving, walking or need to take public transport. You can quickly flick between these options using the buttons at the top of the directions pane. When you have your start and end points entered and travel method chosen, click Get Directions.
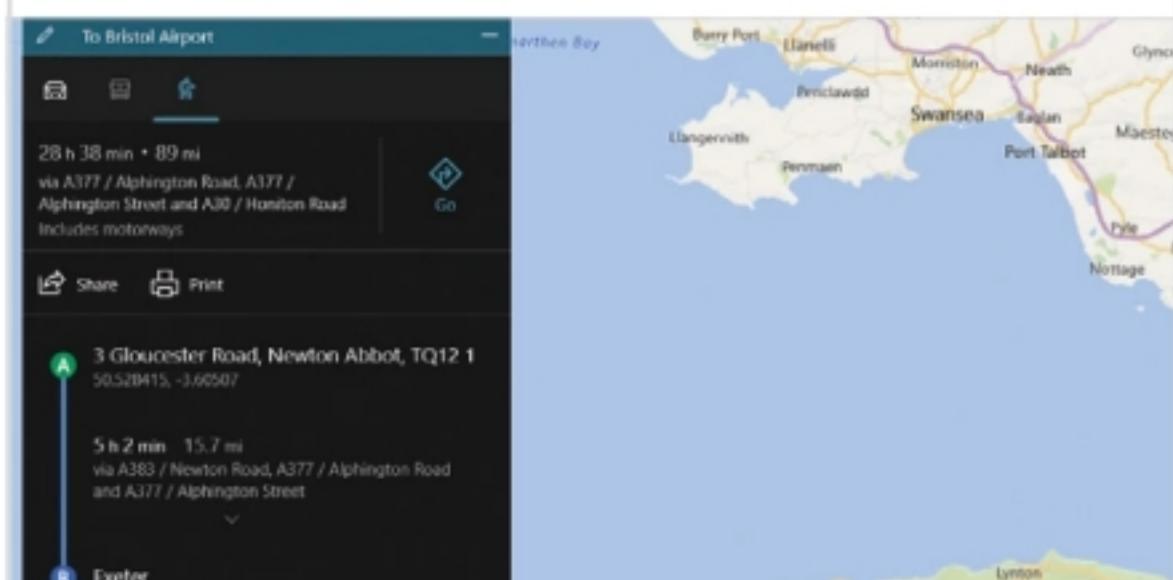
Step 4 The route is now shown on the map, with an estimated travel time readout above the destination. If alternative routes are available, they are shown as a light blue line, with the main route shown as a dark blue line. Points along the route are marked, usually where a change of direction is needed.
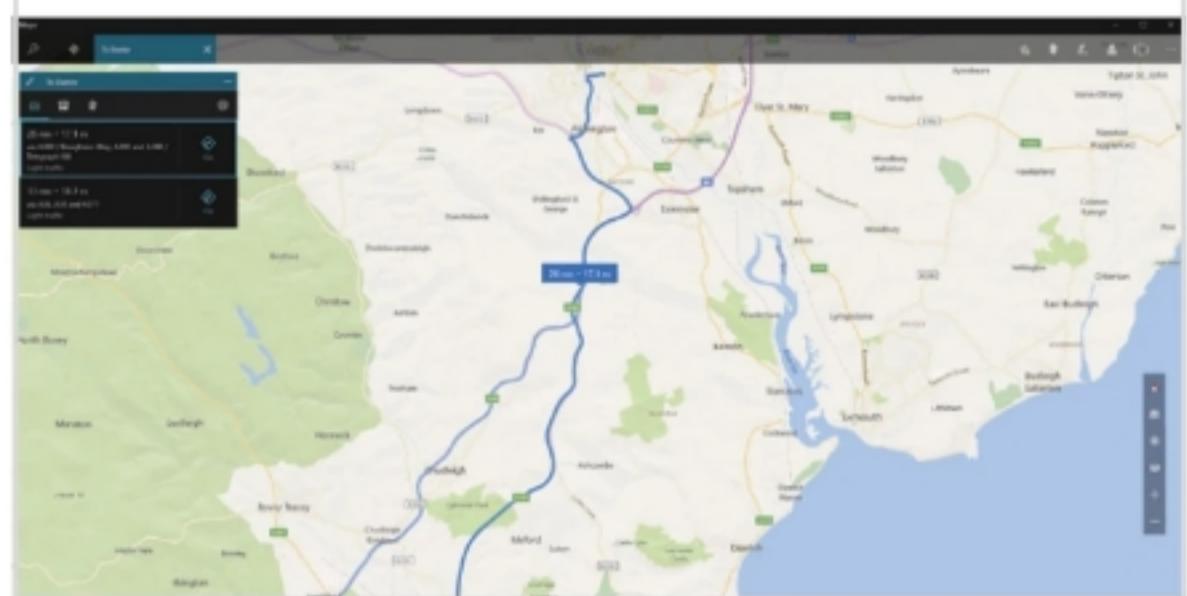
Step 5 If you click Go in the directions pane, Maps switches to a satnav-style view and traces your route as you continue along it. This is more for portable devices such as phones and tablets that you could use for directions in a vehicle. Click the Back button to return to the normal maps view.
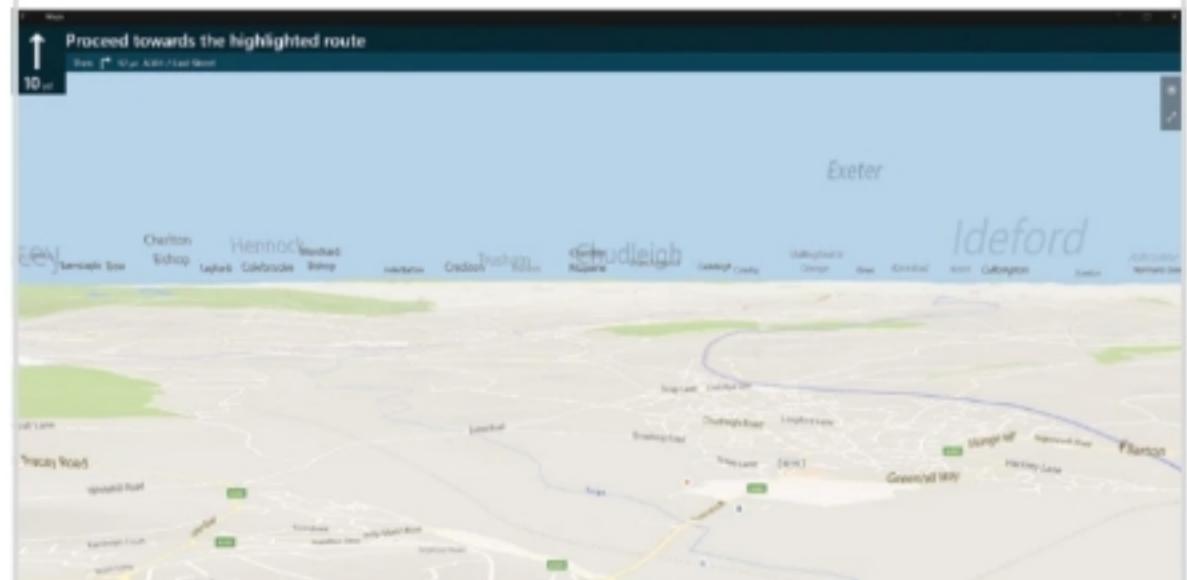
Step 6 You can also plan a route by drawing it. Click the Ink button and then the Directions tool in the menu that opens. Draw a line along the route you wish to take and Maps refines that into a proper route along roads, missing dead-ends, etc. You can save or share the route just as with any other.
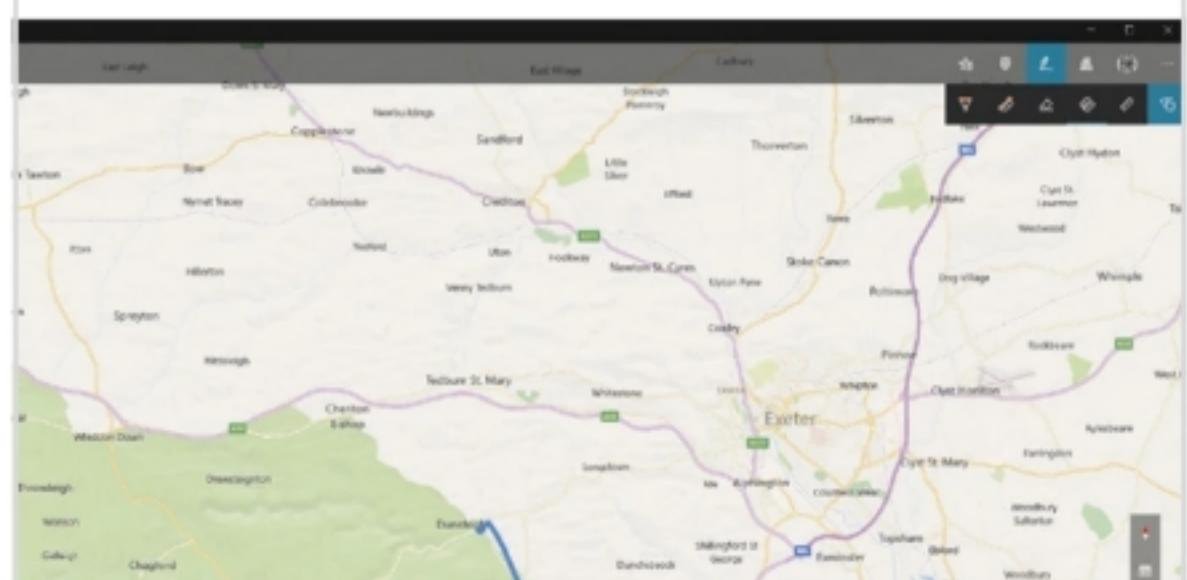
Learn How to Navigate with Maps

Boasting excellent mapping, great aerial photography, up-to-the-minute traffic and the ability to calculate directions by public transport, road or foot, the Maps app is one of the very best ways to navigate. New additions make the Maps app even more useful.

Moving Around in Maps

There are few controls in the Maps app but they allow you to do a lot of things very easily. Let's take a look at how you move around in the app.

Step 1 The easiest way to move the map around is to left-click and drag it and use the mouse wheel or trackpad slider to zoom in and out. This allows you to move the map around to focus on the area you need. If you are zoomed far out of the map, double-clicking the mouse zooms in quickly.

Step 2 Maps has a dedicated control panel on the side of the window containing, from top to bottom: Rotate, hold pointer on it to see; Tilt, hold pointer over to see options; Show Location; Map Views/Layer; and Zoom in and Zoom out. You can also tilt by holding the right Mouse button and moving up and down.
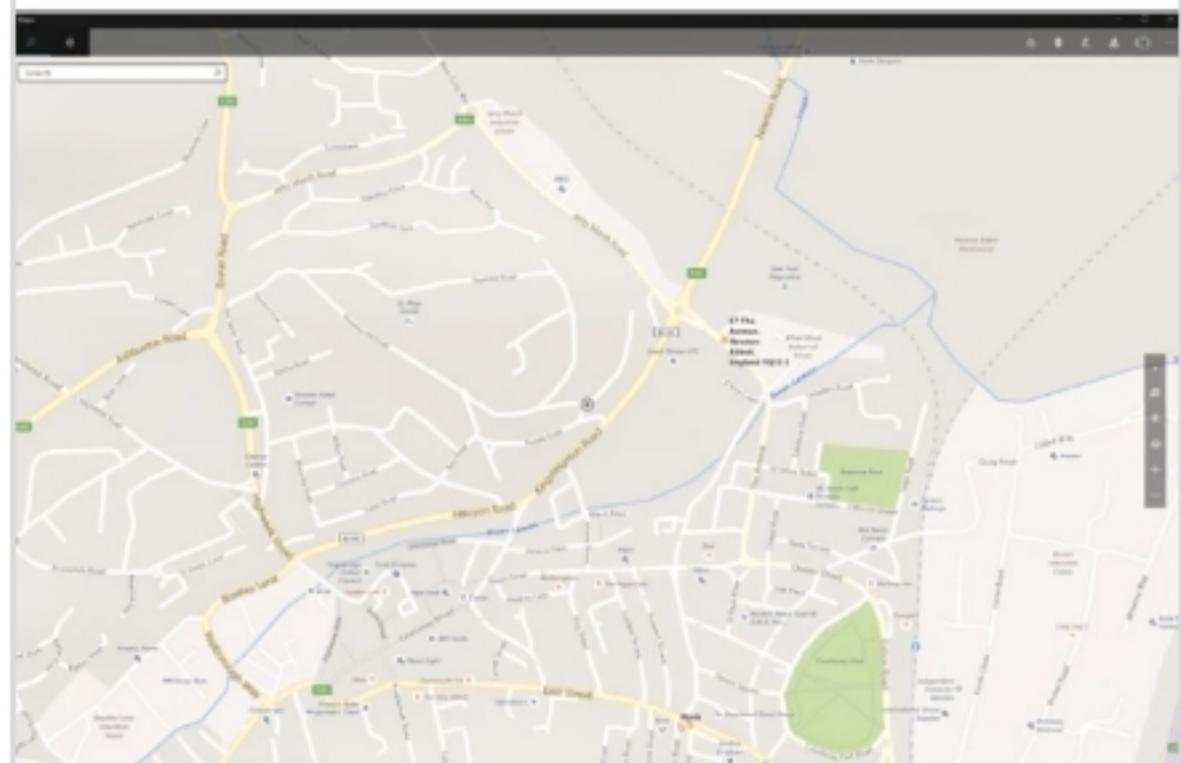
Step 3 Clicking on things like Saved Places or 3D Cities in the top control bar, tabs will line up alongside the permanent Search and Directions buttons at the top left of the window. You can then click on them at any time to see the information contained in each pane or tab.
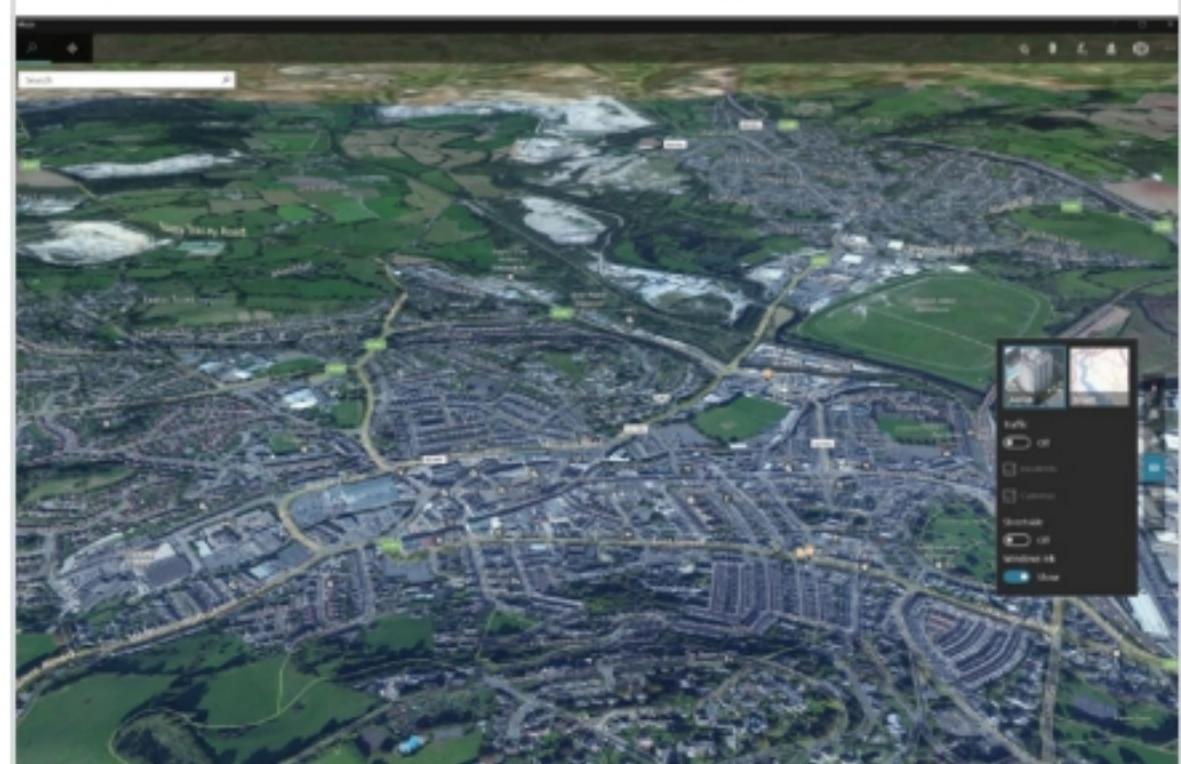
Step 4 Right-clicking on the map brings up a small action menu. This lets you set a To location, a From location (for planning a route), add a new destination and drop a pin in a specific location. When you drop a pin, a new window opens allowing you to search for things at that location, add favourites and more.
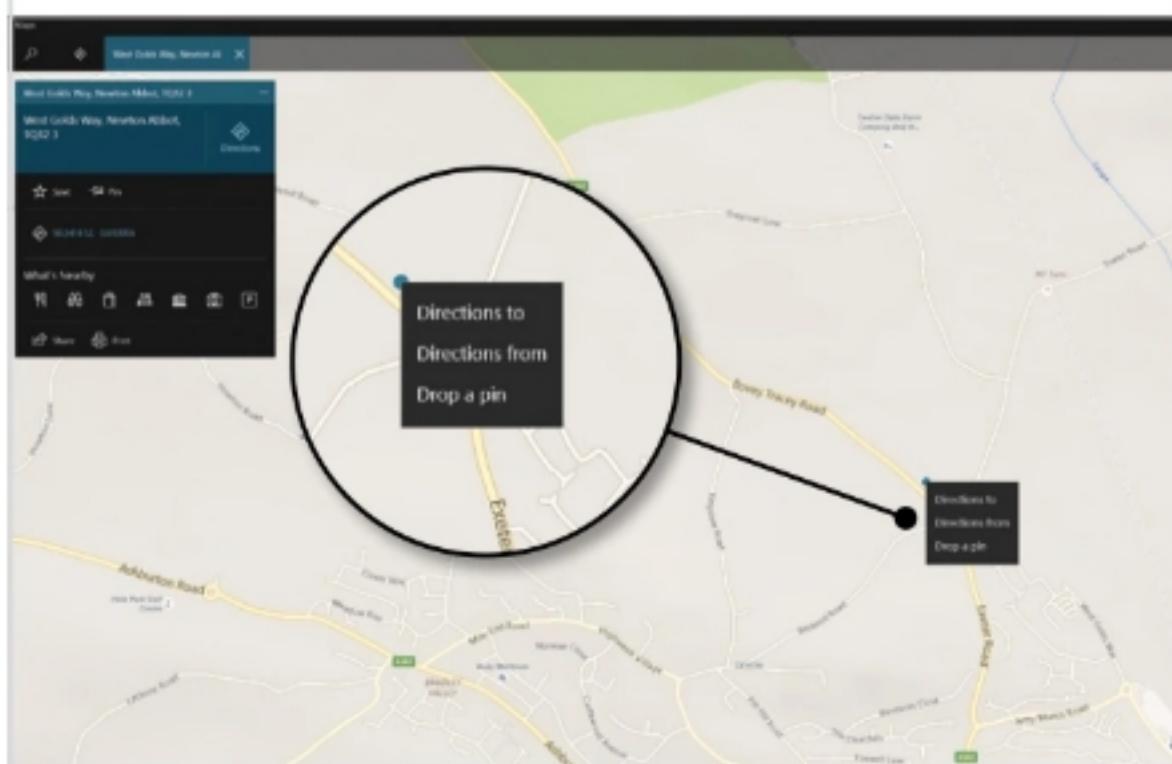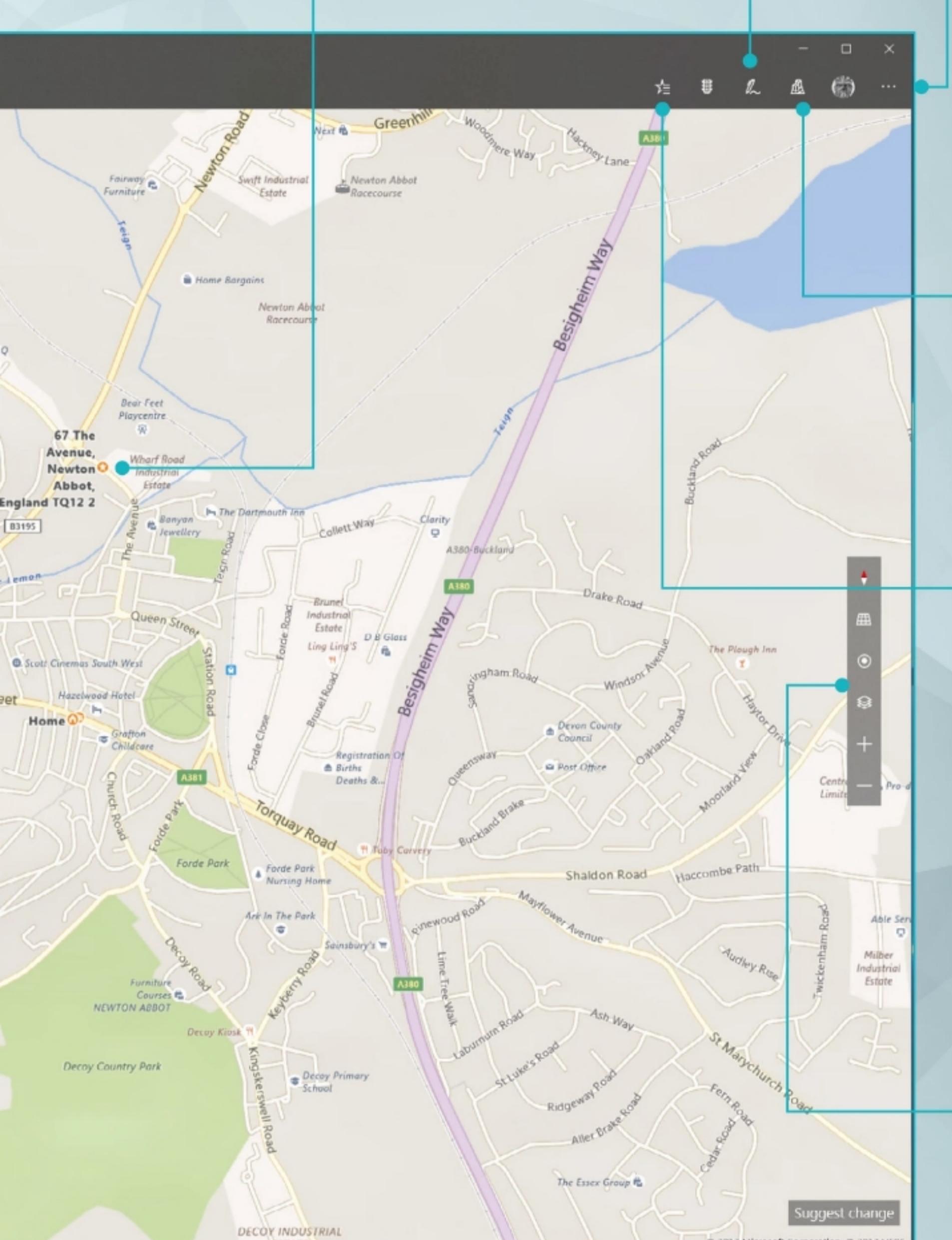
Your Location

When you open the Maps app it will try to pinpoint your approximate location. You may be asked to allow this location tracking to happen. Your location will then be show on the map as a small black and grey circle. You can click on this to see more information, if available, and then save the location as a favourite by clicking the star in the pane that opens.

Windows Ink

Windows Ink allows you to write or draw on a map using the various pen tools (including colours). You can also use the pen to trace a route and have Maps tell you the distance of the line drawn, or even the directions for the route you marked out. You can then save the customised map. It is really very clever and fun to play around with.

Maps Settings

The Maps app settings let you choose the units of measurement used, depending on your preference and your preferred defaults for directions and location. This last option will be used if the app can't find you, by using location services. You can also download maps for offline use or upload maps that have been saved elsewhere, that have been shared with you perhaps.

3D Cities

The 3D Cities button should be fairly self-explanatory. Click the button to open the pane and you will see an alphabetical list of the cities with thumbnails that have been mapped in 3D. Click the Country/Region heading at the top to refine the list. Click on any of the thumbnails to load the 3D map; loading time will vary, depending on your Internet connection speed.

Saved Places

The Saved Places pane contains all of your saved locations. These can be anything from a favourite coffee shop to the street where you parked your car in a new city. To add places, search for a location and select the star underneath the correct one in the search results list. You then have the option to give the favourite a nickname or set it as Home or Work.

Rotate & Tilt

The small floating control panel on the right of the Maps window contains several useful tools for changing the current view. The top two controls are rotate and tilt, allowing you to either rotate the map around the central point or tilt the map to give you an isometric view. You can easily centre your view on your location again by clicking the third icon down.

Explore the Powerful Maps App

Just like Google, Microsoft provides its own Maps app. This incredibly useful tool not only shows you a 2D map of anywhere in the world but also lets you see a satellite view, traffic information and even view major cities in 3D. You can even draw or write on top of maps.

Directions

You can use the Map app to plan routes: in a car, by public transport and even on foot. Select your chosen transportation method using the icons at the top of the Directions pane. You can either leave the A field as My Location or type a new one. In the B field, type your destination. The route will appear on the map. You can refine the route by clicking the Options button.

Search

Click the Search button on the left-hand side of the map window and a new pane will open. This pane contains some search suggestions, such as Hotels and Coffee and Shopping, with the standard search field at the top. As you type your search, suggestions will appear in the search pane. You can click any of these to find that location.

Maps View

The Maps view is the default one for the Maps app. This is what will greet you when you first load the app on your Windows 10 PC. You can zoom in and out of the map using either the + and – buttons on the control panel on the right of the window or by scrolling back and forward with the scroll wheel on your mouse (if you use one).
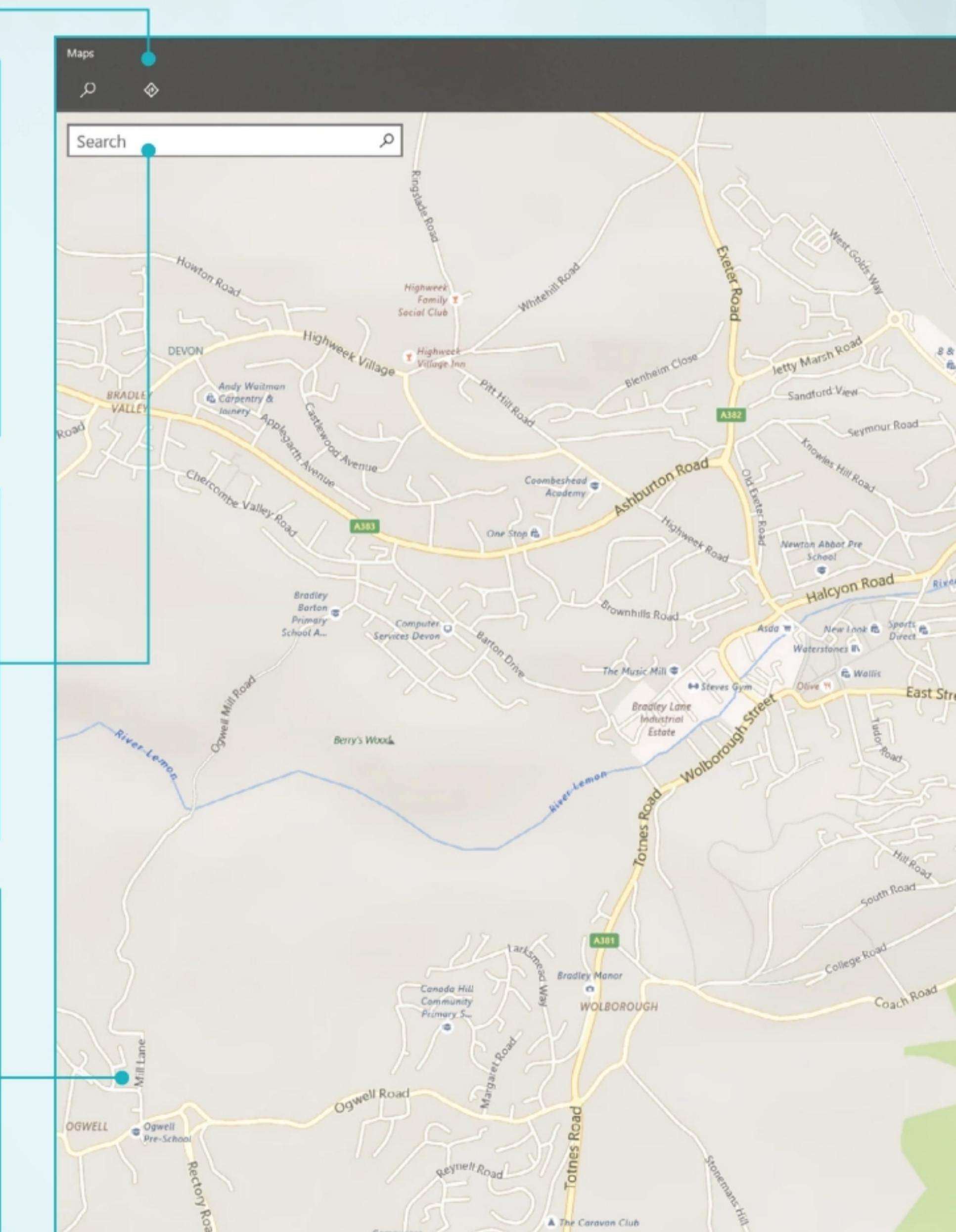
Doing More with Windows 10

From personalising core apps like Cortana to installing alternative browsers and setting up dual monitors on your PC, this section will show you some of the many ways you can take control of your Windows 10 computer. If you want to get more from your PC, this is the place to look.

Contents

Sharing to Nearby Devices

Nearby Sharing lets you share your videos, photos, documents and websites with people and devices close by, over Bluetooth or Wi-Fi. Useful if, for example, you're in a meeting with colleagues and need to quickly send them a report you're looking at on your screen.

Nearby Sharing

Share your files quickly with Nearby Sharing: your computer automatically picks the fastest way to share your file or webpage, either over Bluetooth or Wi-Fi.

Step 1 To enable Nearby Sharing, open Settings and click on System. Now click on Shared experiences and turn on the Nearby Sharing toggle switch. If you have not yet applied the Windows 10 Spring/April update, you will need to do so before you can view the Nearby Sharing option here.
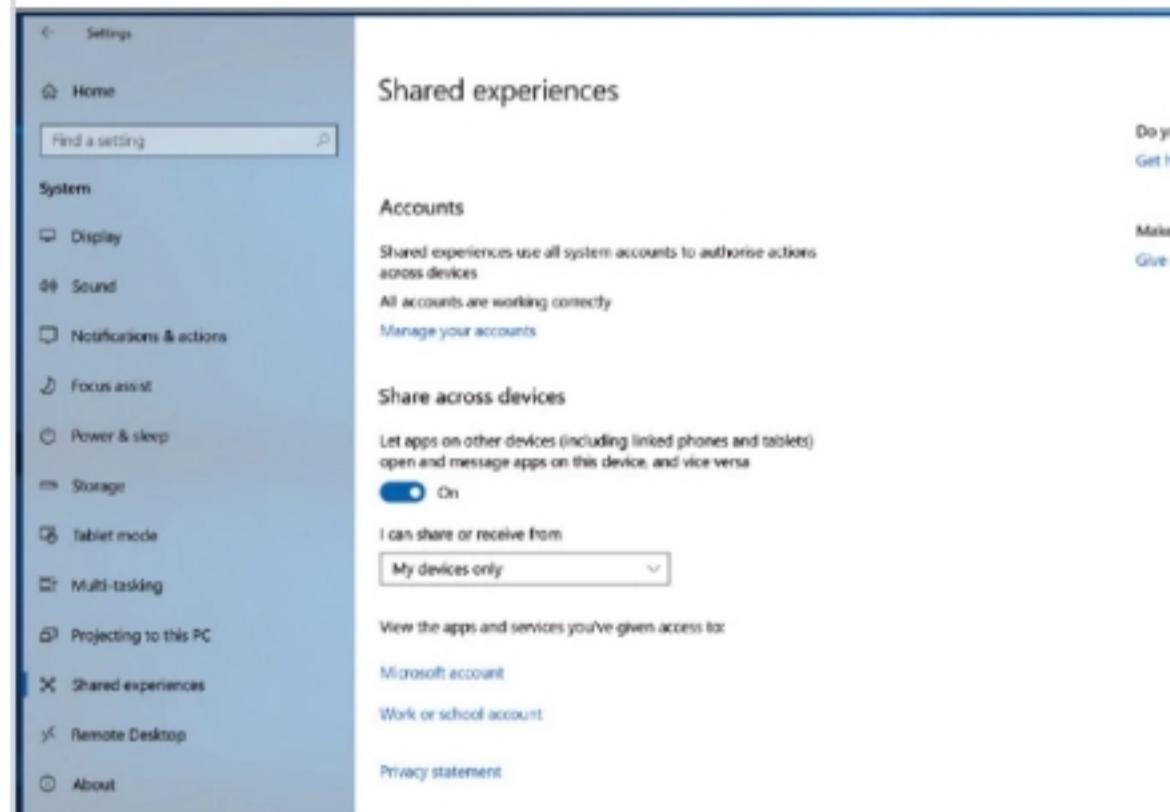
Step 3 If there is a nearby device available, it will be shown in the share menu that pops up. You will need to know the name of the device you want to share to. Once you select the device, the other user will see a notification asking them to accept the transfer. This will time out in a few seconds if not accepted.
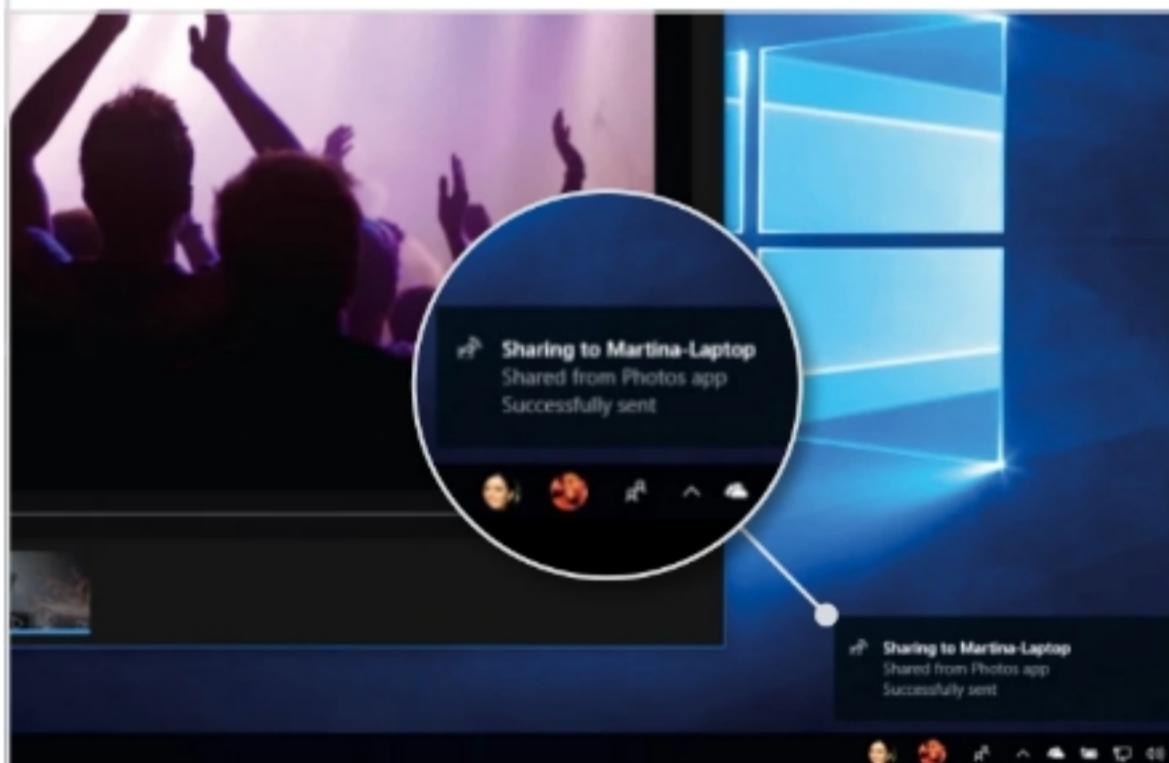
Step 2 You can also activate Nearby Sharing from the quick actions menu in the Action Center. You can send any video, photo, document or webpage viewed on Microsoft Edge to people or devices nearby by clicking on the share icon in the top right corner of the app or right-clicking to view the share menu.
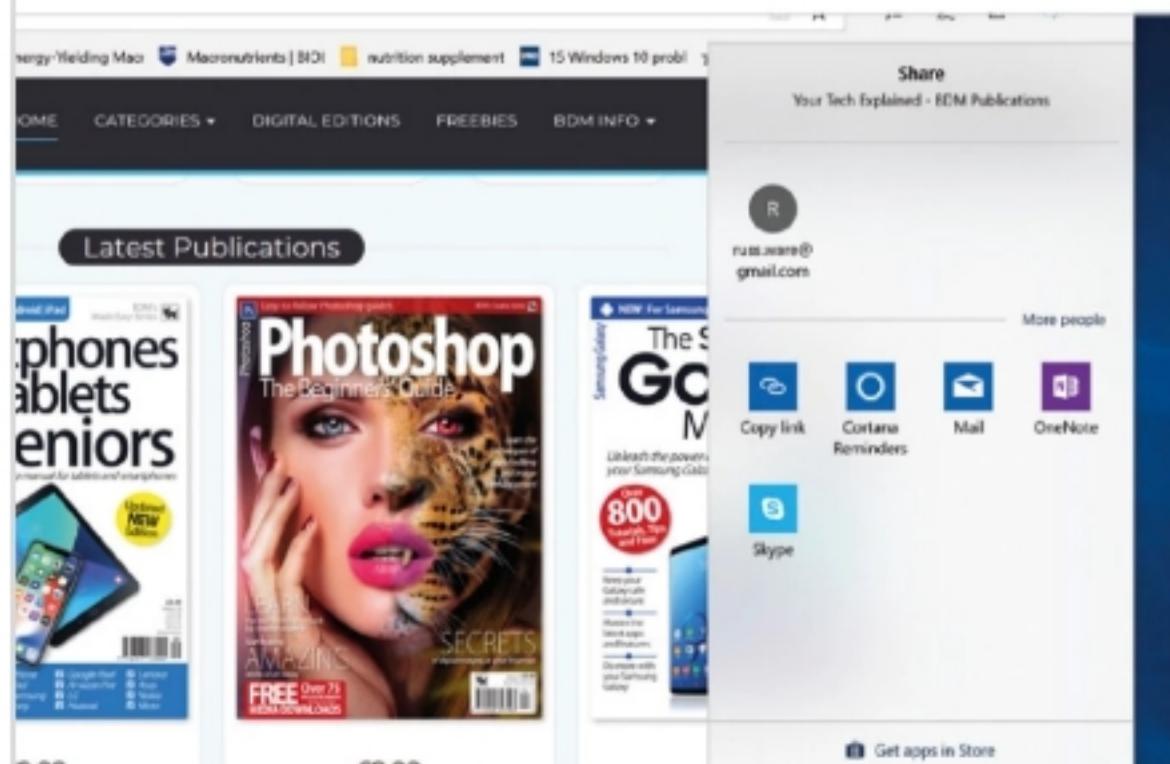
Step 4 By default, transfers will be stored in the Downloads folder but you can specify another folder or another drive very easily. Open settings and click on system > shared experiences. Under 'Nearby Sharing', look for the 'Save files I receive to' option and click the Change button.
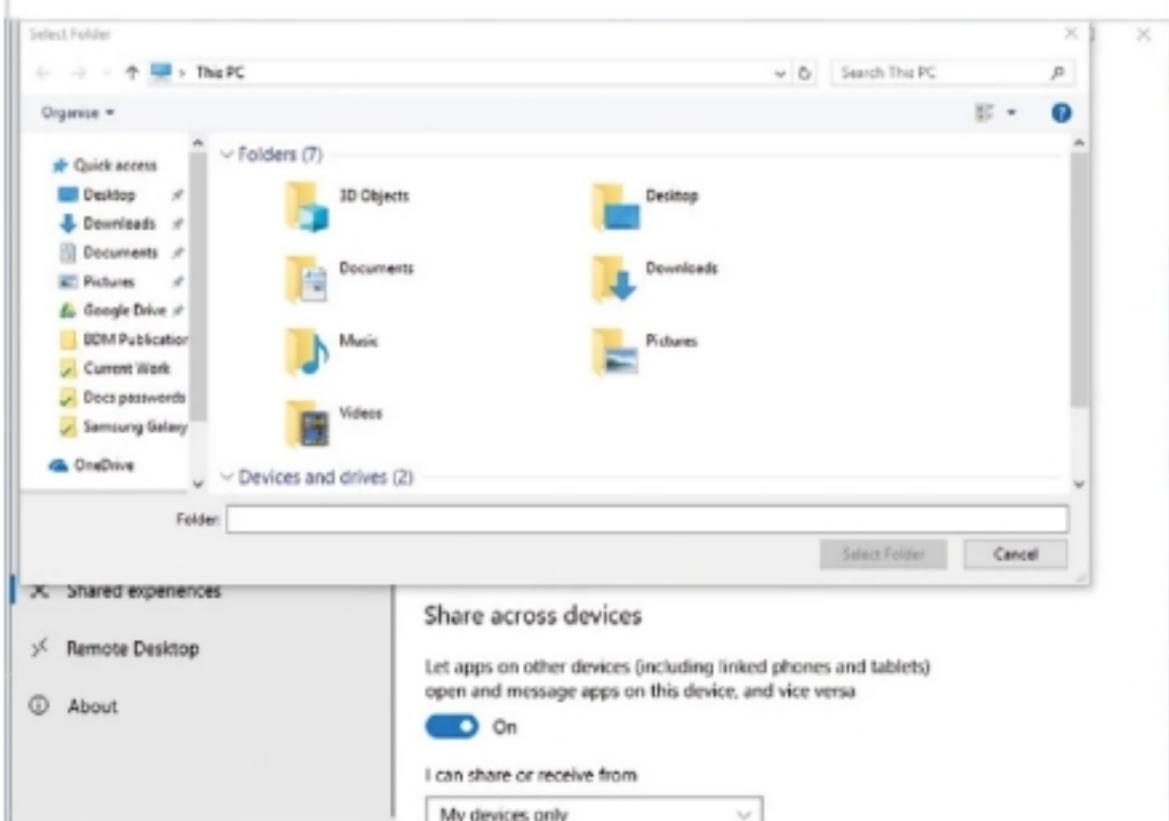
Step 5 Select your friend from the search results, assuming you can see them in the list, and click Add to Contacts. Type a quick note to introduce yourself and then click Send. They will receive a request from you, along with the message and can choose whether to accept you or not.
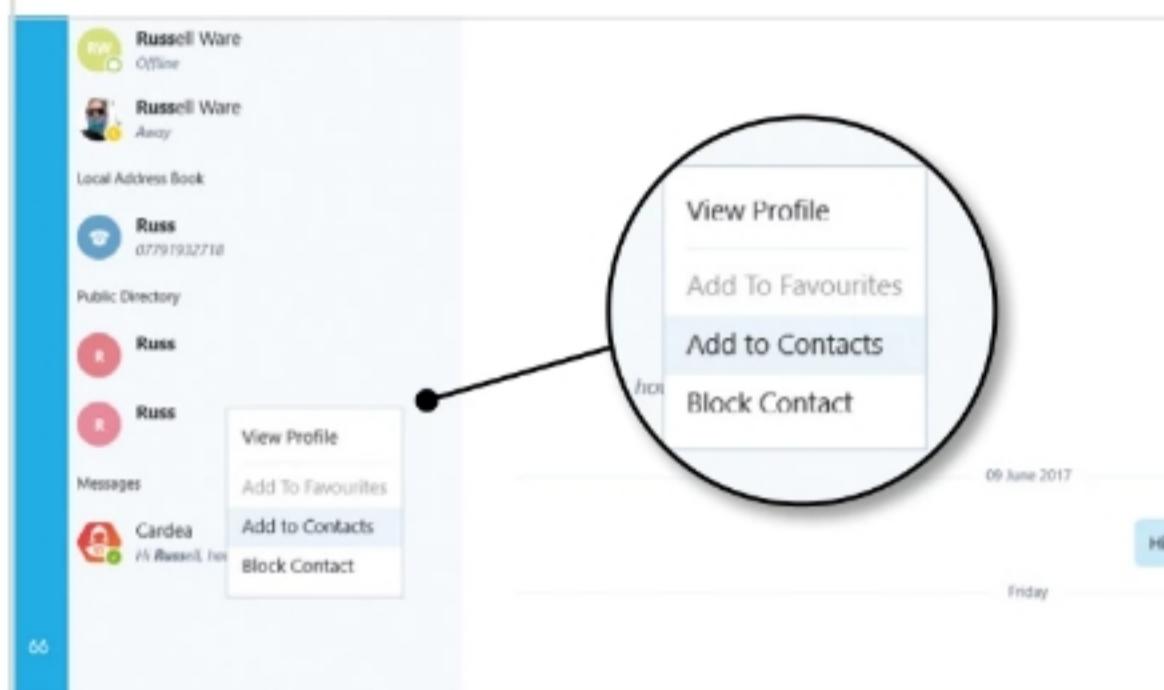

Step 6 You can select any contact from your contacts list and then either instant message them or start a voice or video call. If the contact you click on has Skype, the call option buttons will appear in the top right corner of the window. Click the relevant button to start a call.
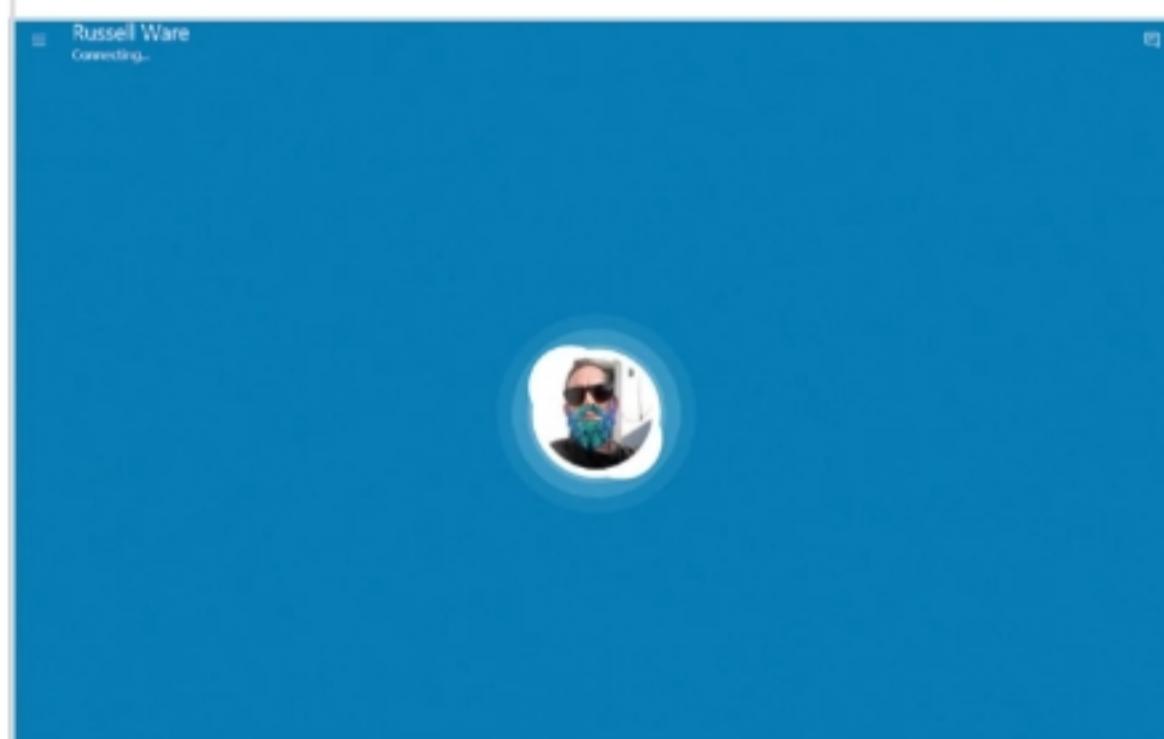
Step 7 Skype instant messaging makes it easy to keep in touch with your contacts and groups wherever they are. You can share files, photos and contacts. To instant message one of your contacts, select their name and start typing at the bottom of the main window.
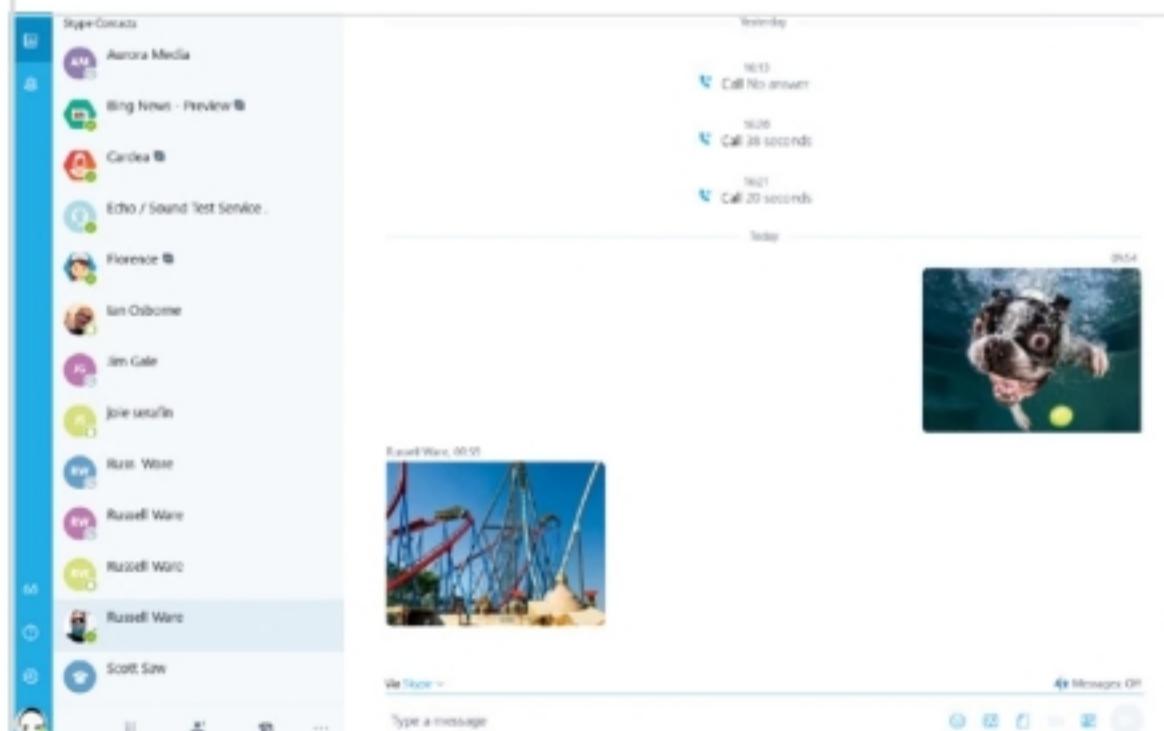
Step 8 If you want to make calls to contacts not using Skype (you can make calls to mobiles and landlines too), you will need to add some Skype credit. To do this, click on your profile picture in the bottom left and click the 'Add Skype credit' link.
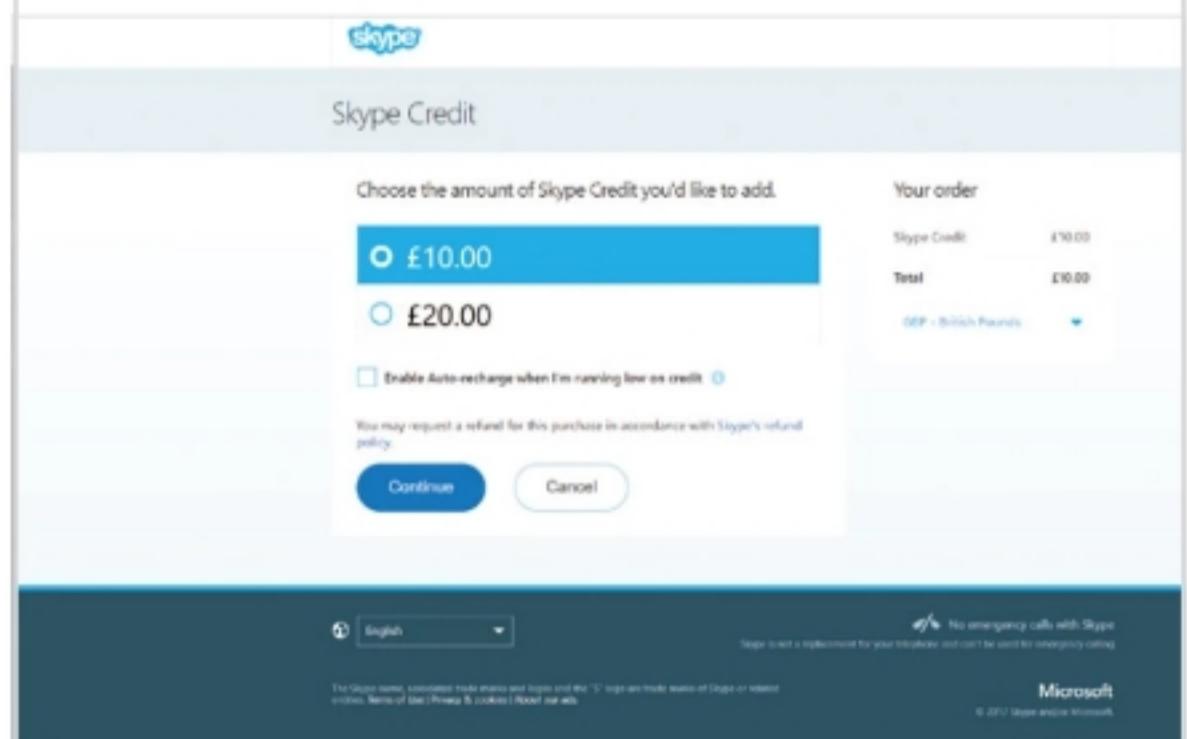
Step 9 Skype also now includes Bots. Bots are artificially intelligent programs that can do many useful things like search for news, summarise webpages, play games and more. You can start chatting with a bot just like you chat with friends, just choose a bot and click Get started.
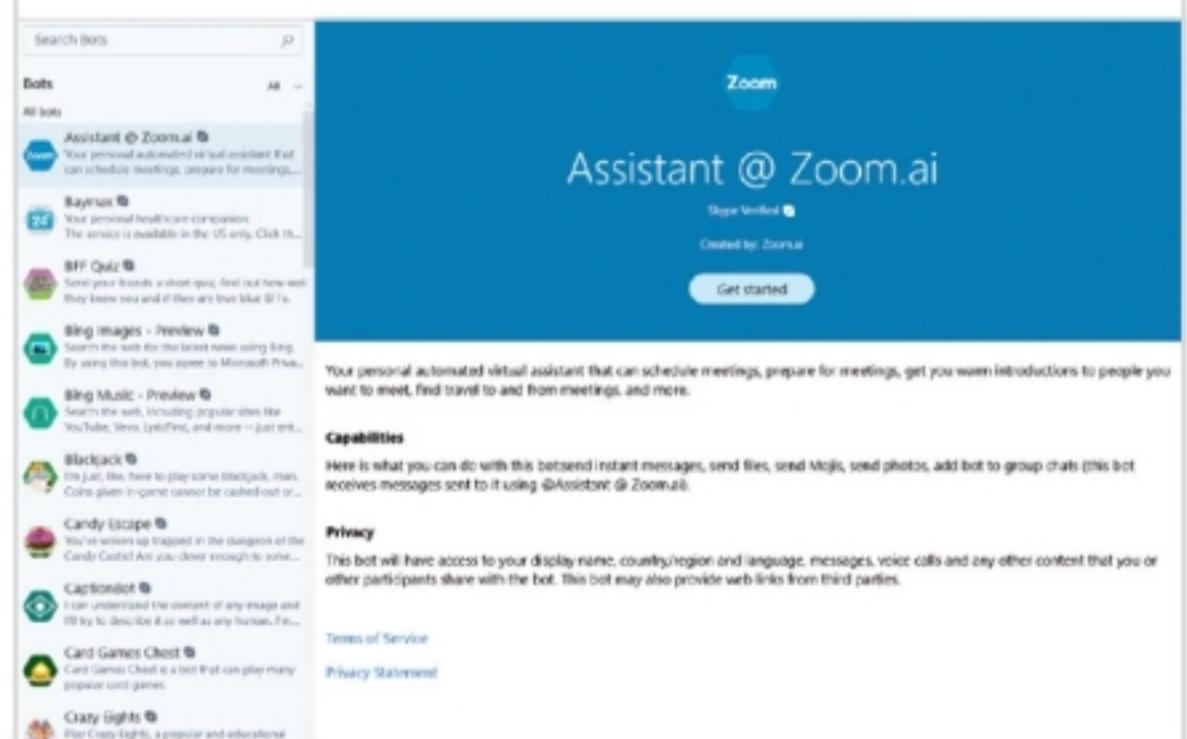
Step 10 Bots vary in how useful they are but some are well worth taking a look at. Take the Bing News bot for example. Add this and then type a word ("Crime" for example) in the conversation window. The bot will return news stories based on that subject.
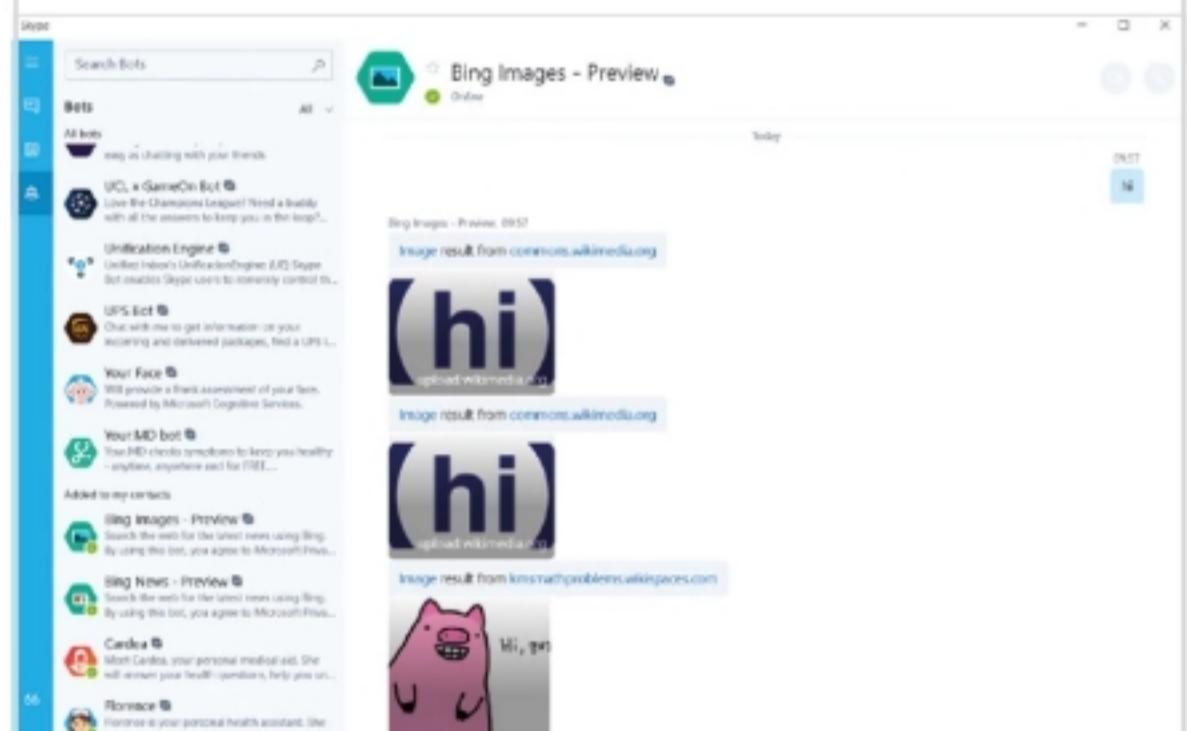
Making Calls with the Skype App

Skype is now a much bigger part of Windows 10 than it once was, and has its own app that comes pre-installed with the OS. Getting to grips with the different tools in Skype is fairly simple but learning how to use it more efficiently and easily takes a little more time.

Install and Use Skype

Recently updated, Skype has now been turned into a proper Windows 10 app and follows the Windows design style more closely.

Step 1 Skype has a dedicated Windows 10 app and this may be preinstalled on your Windows PC but you might need to download it from the Windows store. You can also download Skype directly from www.skype.com as well as check that you have the latest version available.

Step 2 Once installed, you will need to sign in to the Skype app. If you already have a Skype account, which is completely free to set up, just enter your login details when prompted. If not, you can go to www.login.skype.com and create a new account in just a few minutes.

Step 3 The Skype window should now be open on screen. The default view is the Recent conversations screen but this may be completely empty if you are new to Skype. The first thing you need to do as a fresh user, is to begin adding contacts.
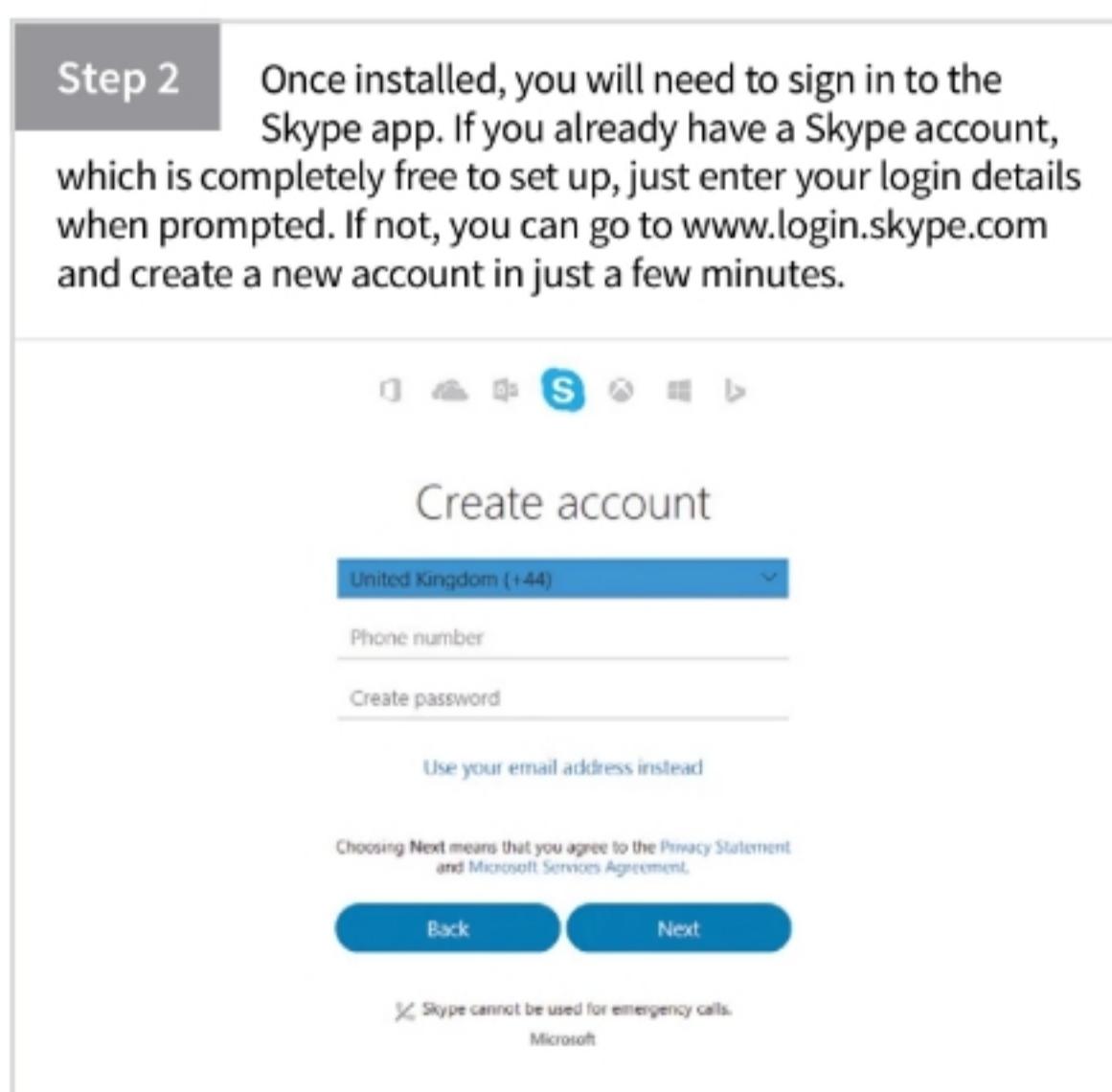
Step 4 Click the Contacts button (2nd button down from the top) and either select the add contact icon at the bottom of the sidebar or click directly in the search text box and type the name, Skype name or email of the person you want to add. Click Search Skype.
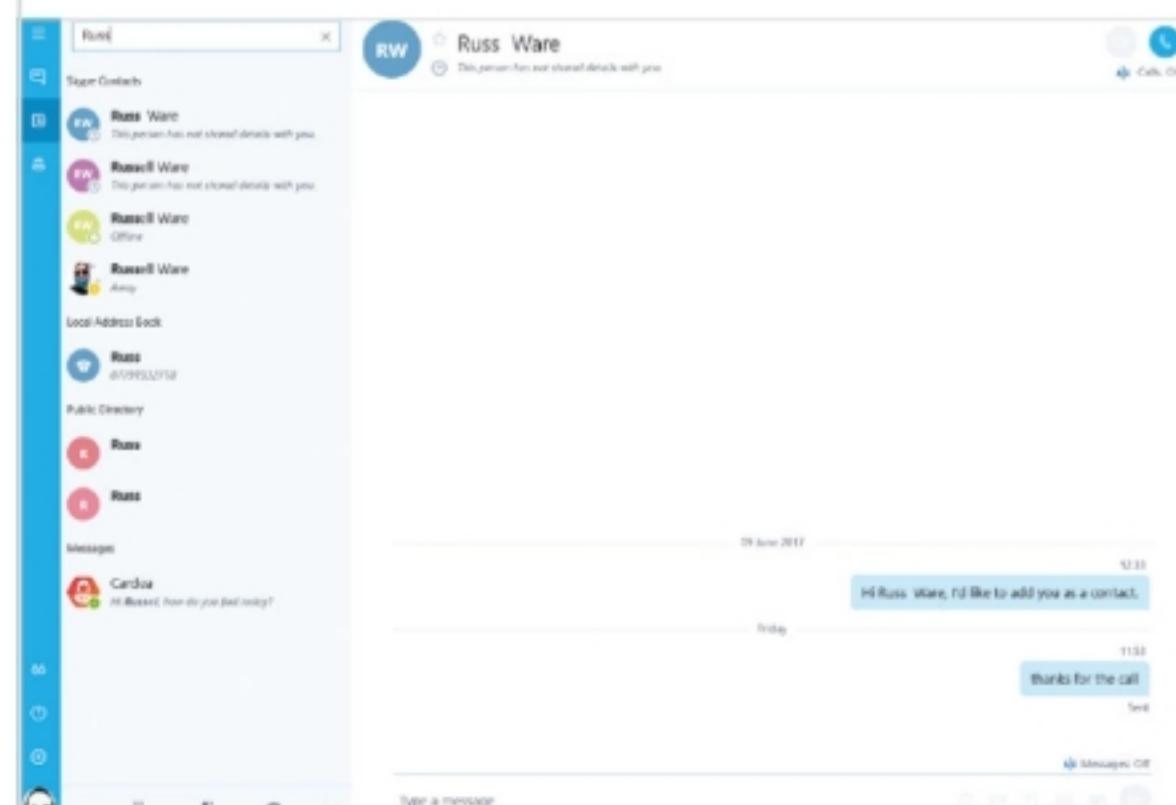
Step 5 When the installation is complete, click on the Pin to Start option within the notification that pops up. WhatsApp can now be located by clicking on the Start button, it's in the groups section, and right-clicking lets you move, resize and unpin the app accordingly.
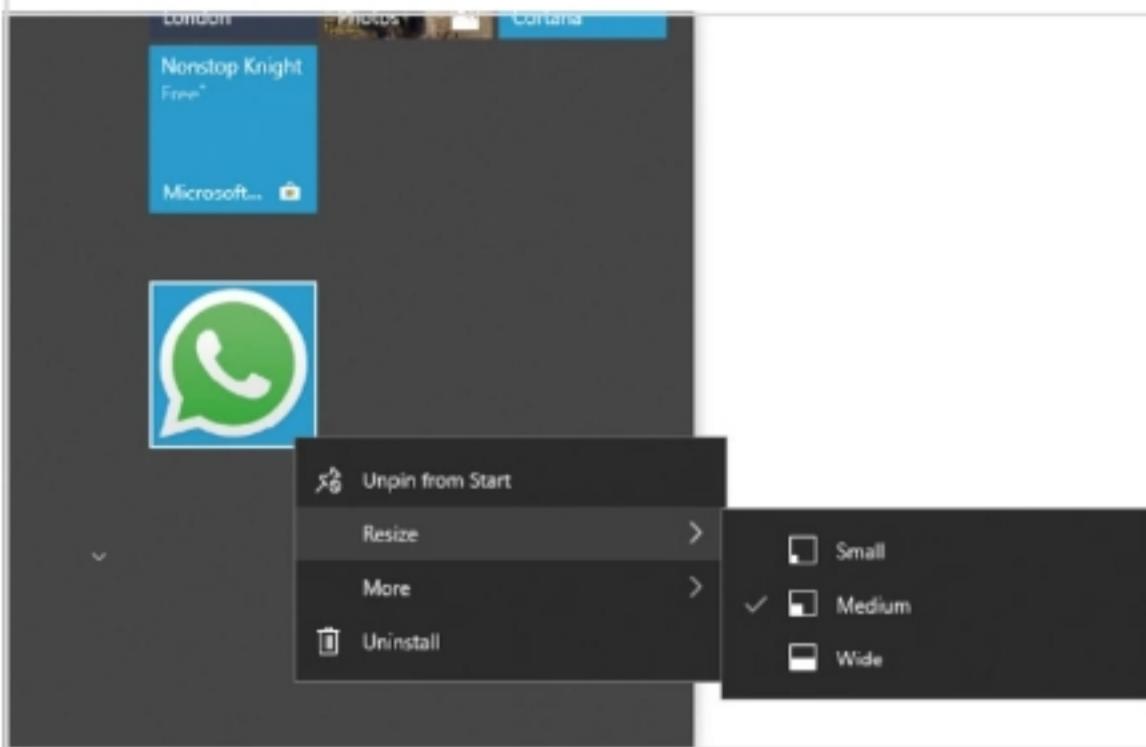
Step 6 Click the app's tile to open WhatsApp. The app window opens with a generated QR Code, which can be scanned in by WhatsApp on your phone. This process matches the account and automatically logs you into your own WhatsApp profile.
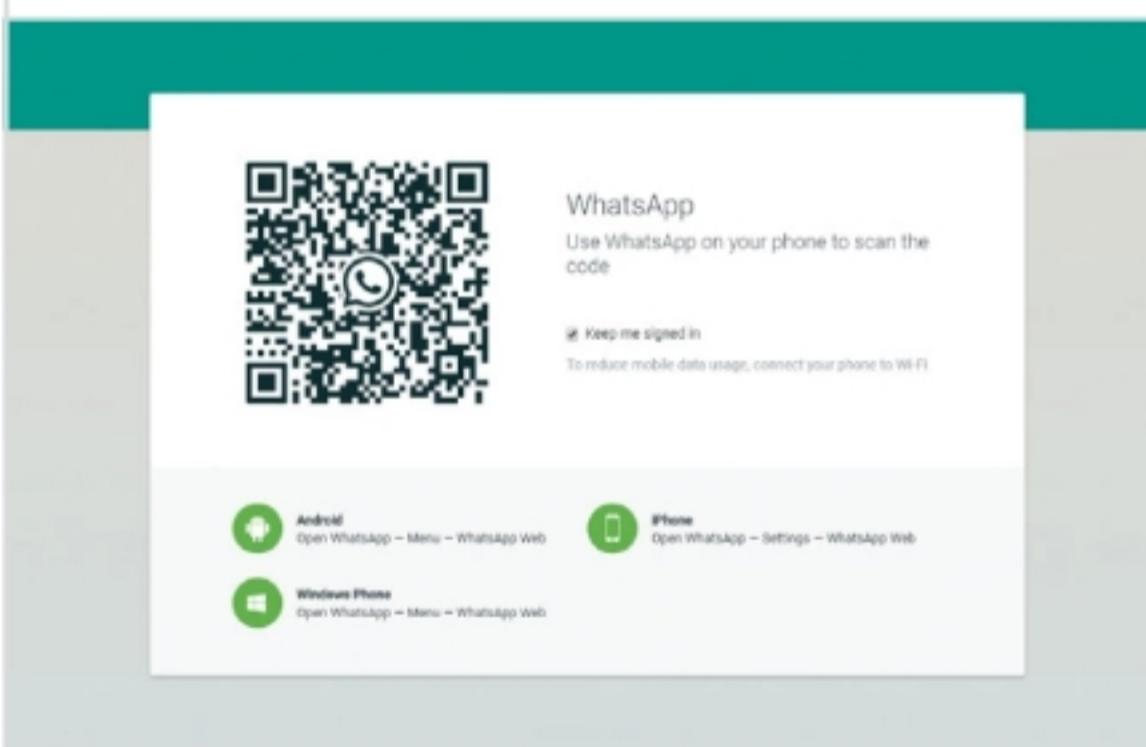
Step 7 You need to open WhatsApp on your phone, then tap on the three vertical dots in the upper right, followed by WhatsApp Web. Point the device's camera at the QR Code and the auto login process will start. If the QR code isn't recognised, you may need to wait a moment for a new QR Code to be generated.
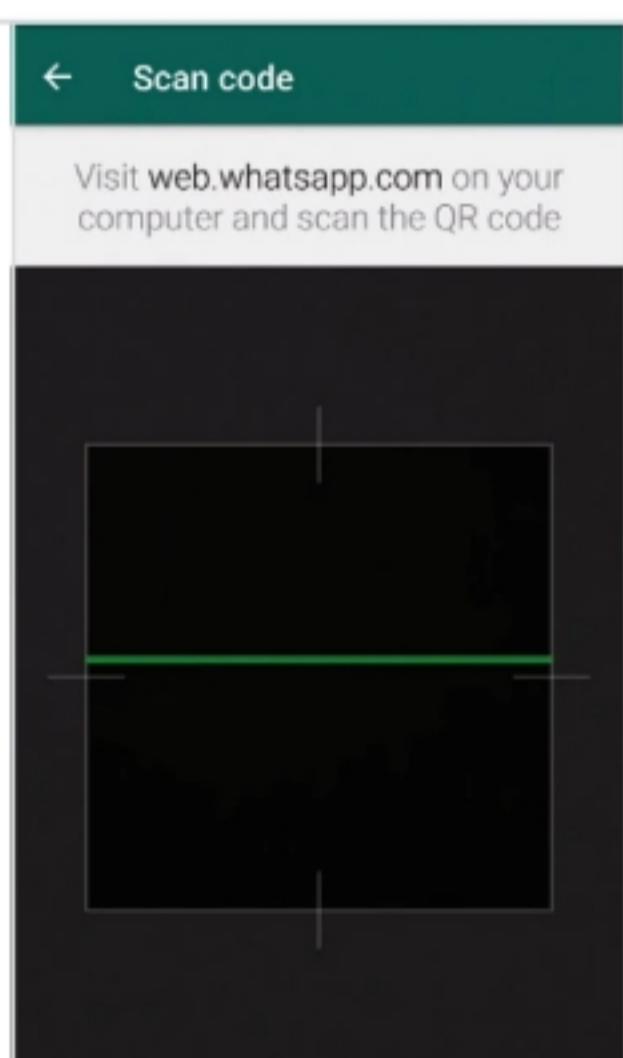
Step 8 The auto login feature takes a few seconds and you may get a notification on your phone indicating a successful login from your Windows 10 PC. With the WhatsApp window open, you can browse through your chats using the left-hand pane, while the chat contents are displayed in the right pane.
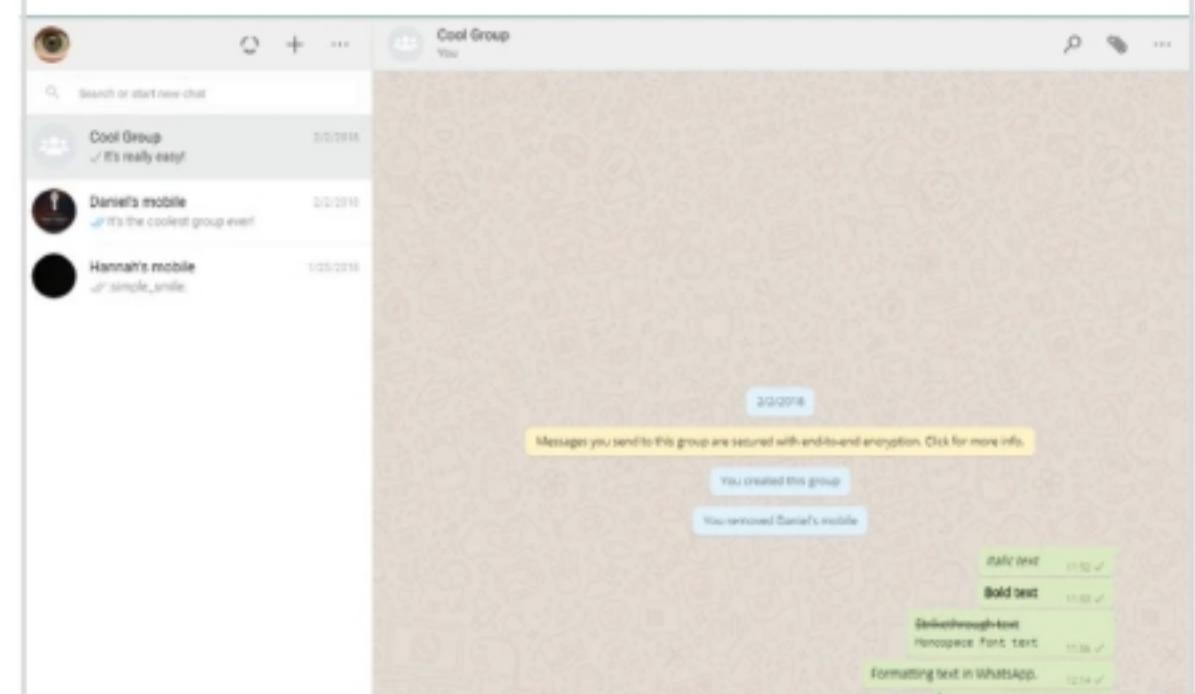
Step 9 There are numerous options along the top of the app. The three horizontal dots represent further settings that can be applied either to a chat, user or your own profile. The icon in the top left of the WhatsApp window is your own profile and from there you can upload a new profile image and edit your personal visibility in WhatsApp.
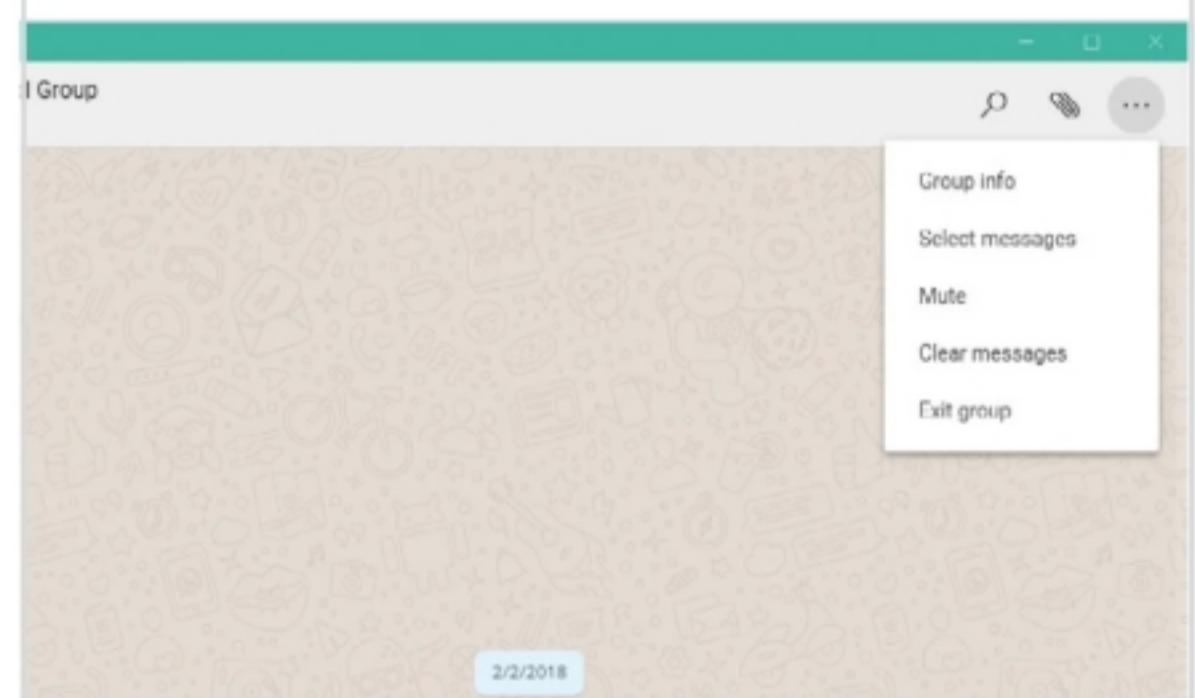
Step 10 WhatsApp on the Windows 10 desktop provides limited functionality compared to what's available in the mobile version. However, you can still create new chats and groups and update your status as you would when using the app on your phone.
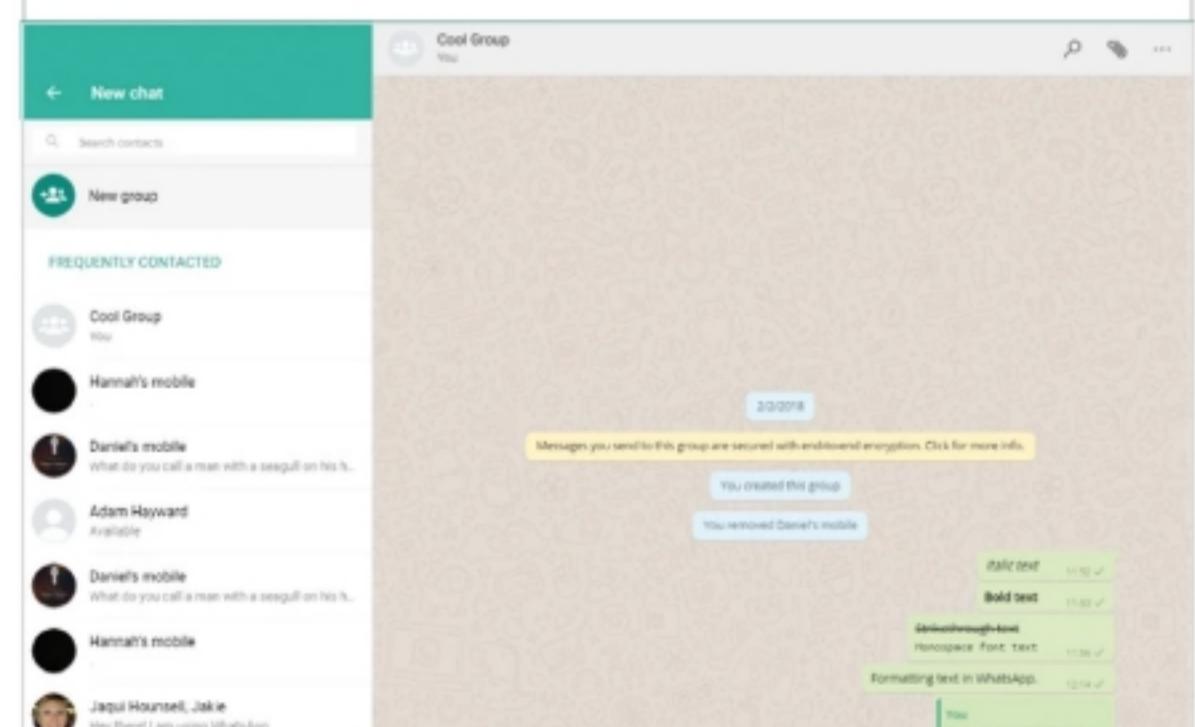
Using WhatsApp in Windows 10

At its heart, WhatsApp is simply a free to use cross-platform instant messaging service but to its many users the app is much more than just a means of keeping in touch. In just ten years, WhatsApp has grown into one of the most used messaging apps available.

Set Up and Use WhatsApp

With an audience of over 1.3 billion and growing, WhatsApp shows no sign of slowing down. Here's how to install and use it via the Windows Store.

Step 1 You need to install WhatsApp and create an account on your phone before you can use it. The app has been developed for Android, iOS and Windows Phone. Tap the Store icon on your phone, searching for WhatsApp. Tap the correct search and you're taken to the relevant page on the Store.

Step 2 With the WhatsApp page on the Play Store open, tap on the Install button and the process with begin. Some phones already have a version of WhatsApp preinstalled by the manufacturer. You can see if yours is one such device as it displays Update and Open buttons. From here it's recommended to tap Update.

Step 3 Once the update or install has finished you will be left with an Open button and Uninstall if you prefer to remove it; you may not be able to remove a preinstalled version though. Tap Open to launch WhatsApp. Now follow the on-screen instructions to begin the set up of WhatsApp, using the phone's number to pair the app with the device.

Step 4 Once you've installed WhatsApp and set up an account on your phone, you can turn your attention to the Windows 10 app. Open the Windows Store and search for WhatsApp Desktop. When the app's page loads up, click the Get button (if your PC doesn't already have it) to begin the installation.

Step 5 Click the Start button. If you decided to Pin to Start, as in the previous step, you can now see that Facebook is available as a tile within the Groups section. This allows you to right-click the tile and opt to resize, turn off live tiles, move, unpin from start and so on.
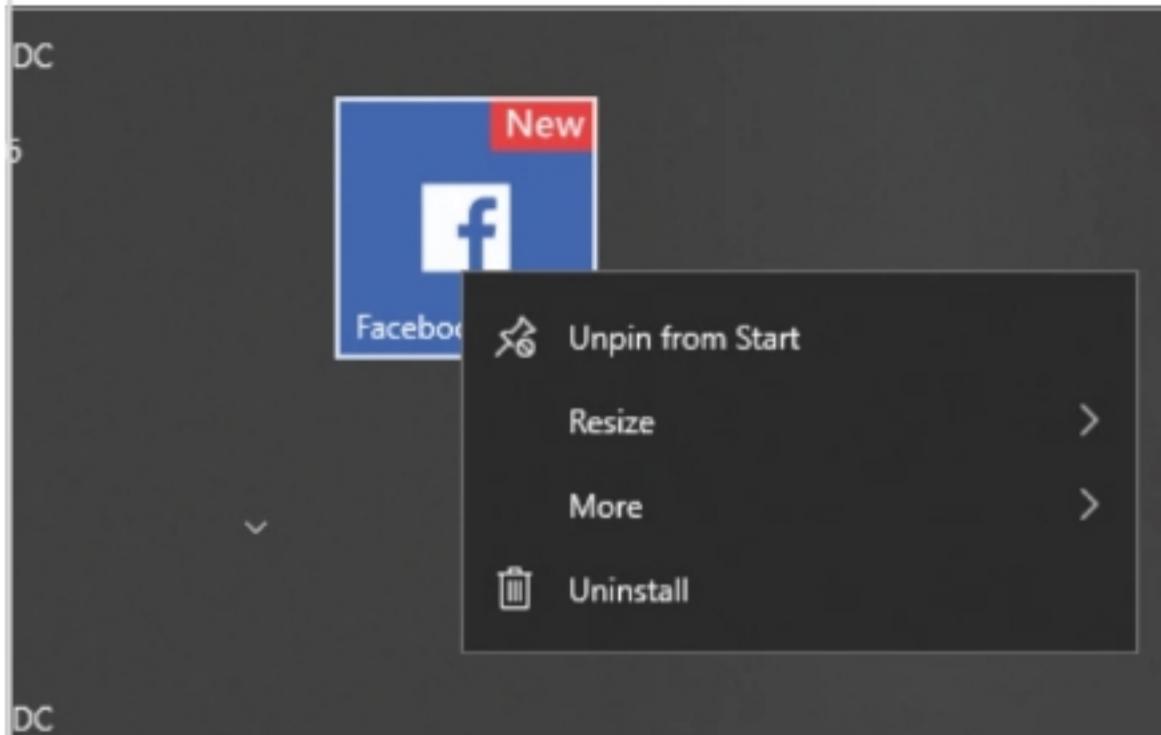

Step 6 Naturally, the next step of the process is to single left-click the Facebook tile to launch it. When launched, the app requests your Facebook user details to log in; enter them into the boxes provided and click the Login button. If you don't currently have a Facebook account, click on the Sign up for Facebook link.
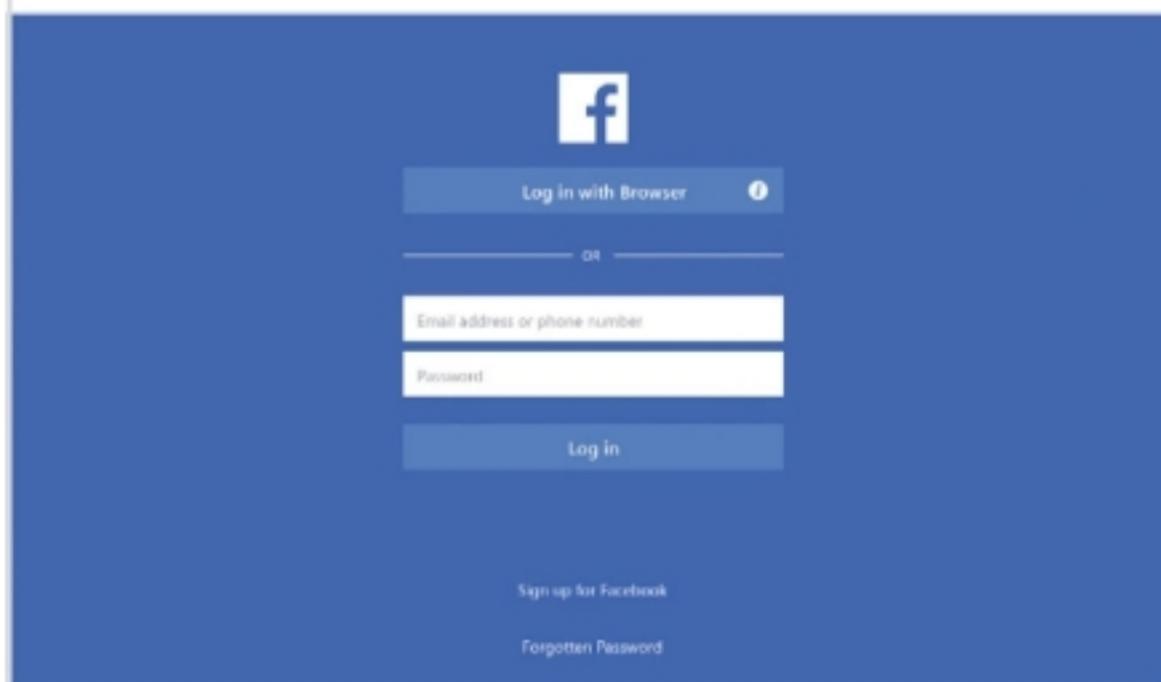
Step 7 Clicking the Sign up for Facebook link will open your default browser to the Facebook Create an Account page. Enter your details and take a moment to view the company's current Terms and Conditions, along with the Data Policy. When your account has been set up, you can close the browser and return to log in at the app.

Step 8 If you don't already have the Location feature enabled within Windows 10, you will receive a notice when you log in to Facebook via the app. It's up to you if you want to enable this feature. Clicking OK will remove the notification but leave the Location setting in Windows 10 unchanged.
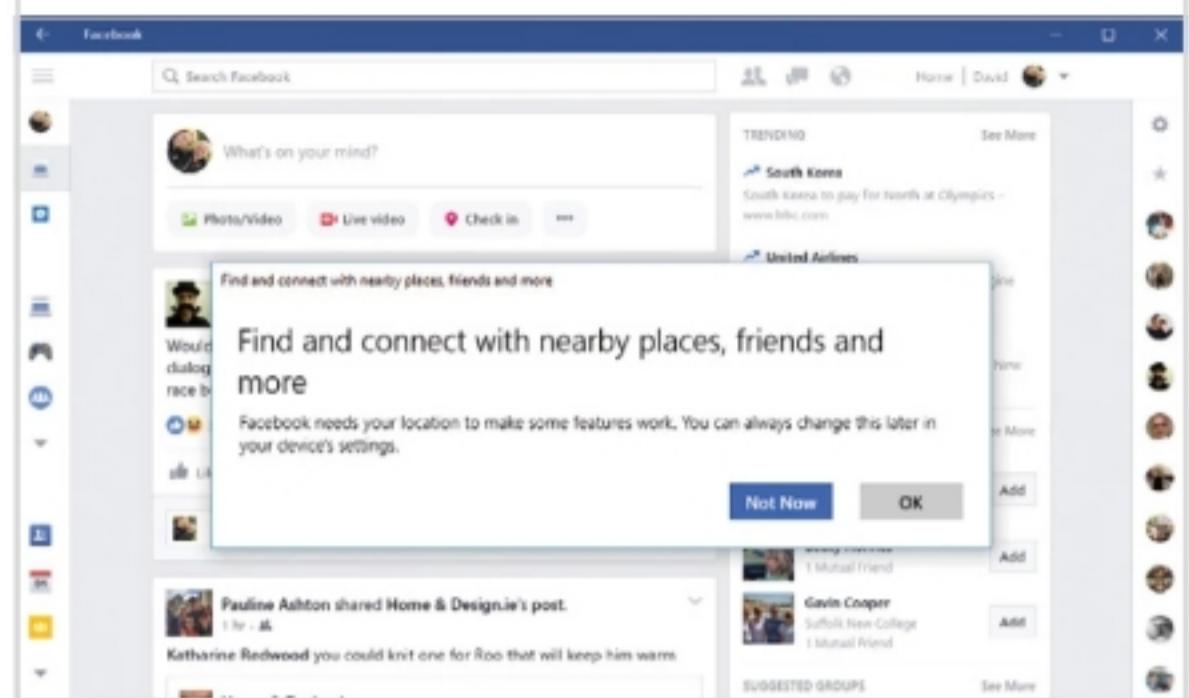
Step 9 If you want to enable Location for Facebook, click on the Start button and enter Location into the search. Click on the Location Privacy Settings result and then enable the Location feature and even specify which apps have access to your precise location.
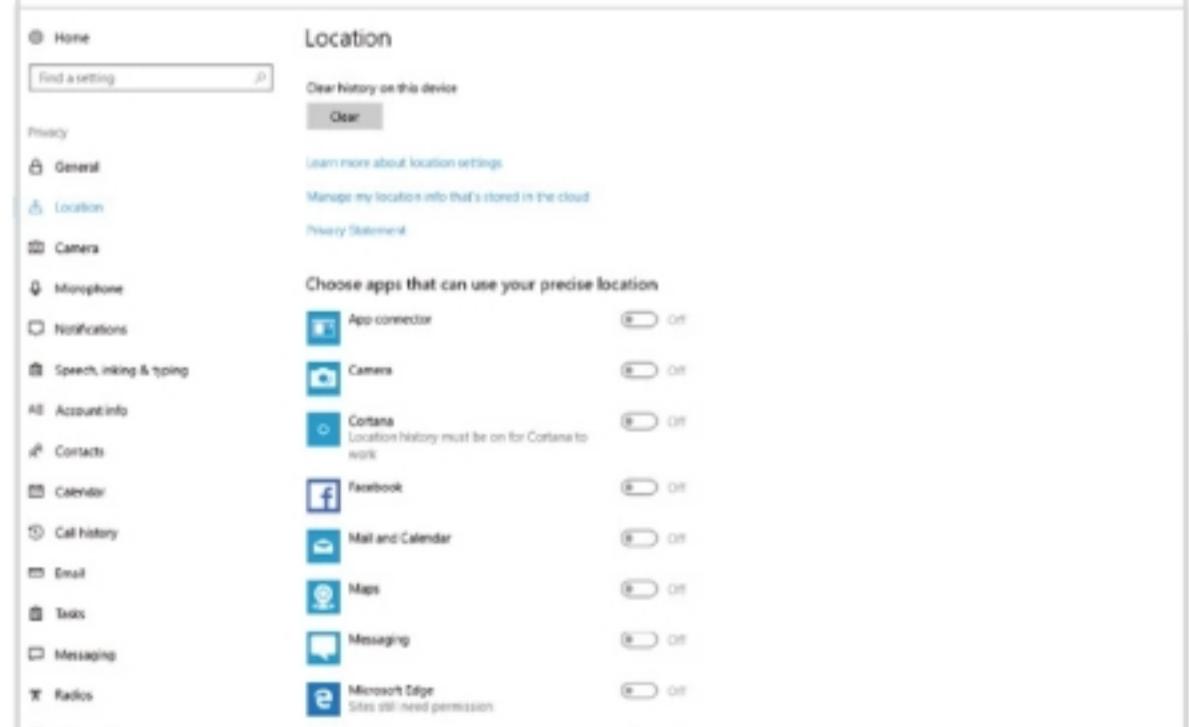
Step 10 The Facebook app presents a slightly more compact view than that of the web-based version. Current online friends are listed down the right-hand side of the screen, while your News Feed and groups are listed down the left. There's the search bar along the top, with friend requests, messages, notifications and your profile settings.
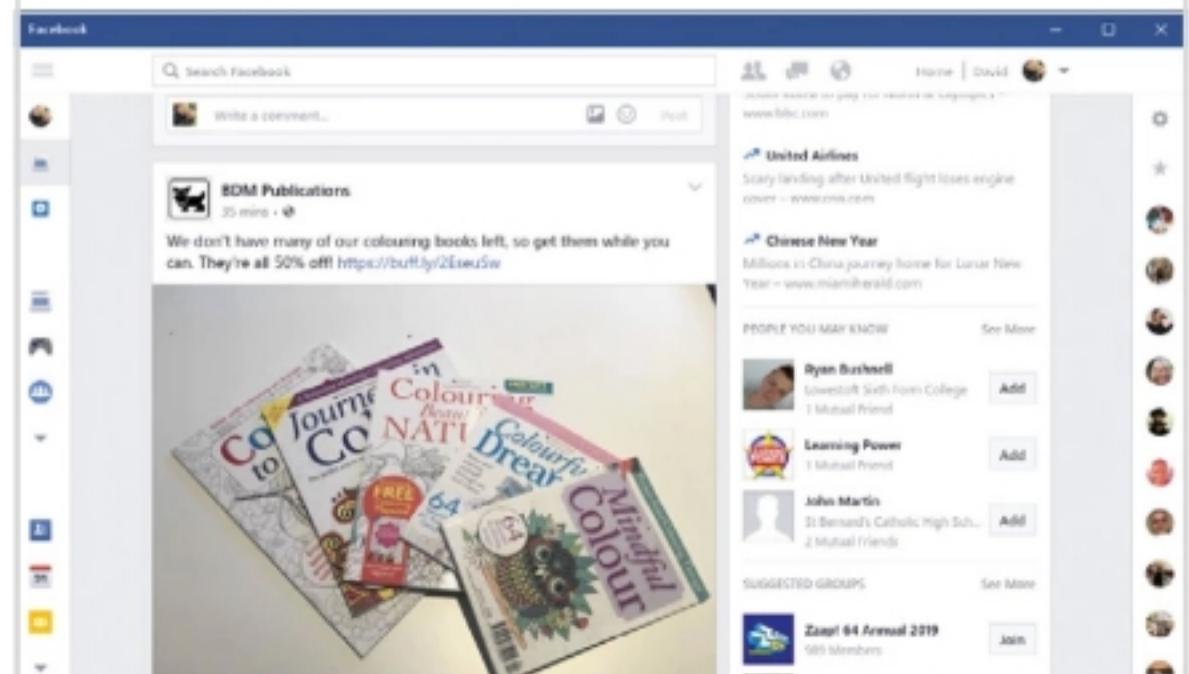
Using the Facebook App in Windows 10

Like it or not, Facebook has changed the way we communicate through social media. Since the company's launch in 2004, the platform has had its fair share of positive and negative media. With over 2.2 billion monthly active users, Facebook is here to stay.

Be Connected. Be Discovered.

If you prefer not to visit Facebook via your browser, the Windows Store has a specially developed app for both PC and mobile platforms that's just as functional as the web-based interface.

Step 1 First, open the Windows 10 Store. In the Search box, located in the top right of the Store window, type Facebook. The first option available, labelled App, is what you're looking for. Simply click it to be taken to the Facebook app page in the Store.
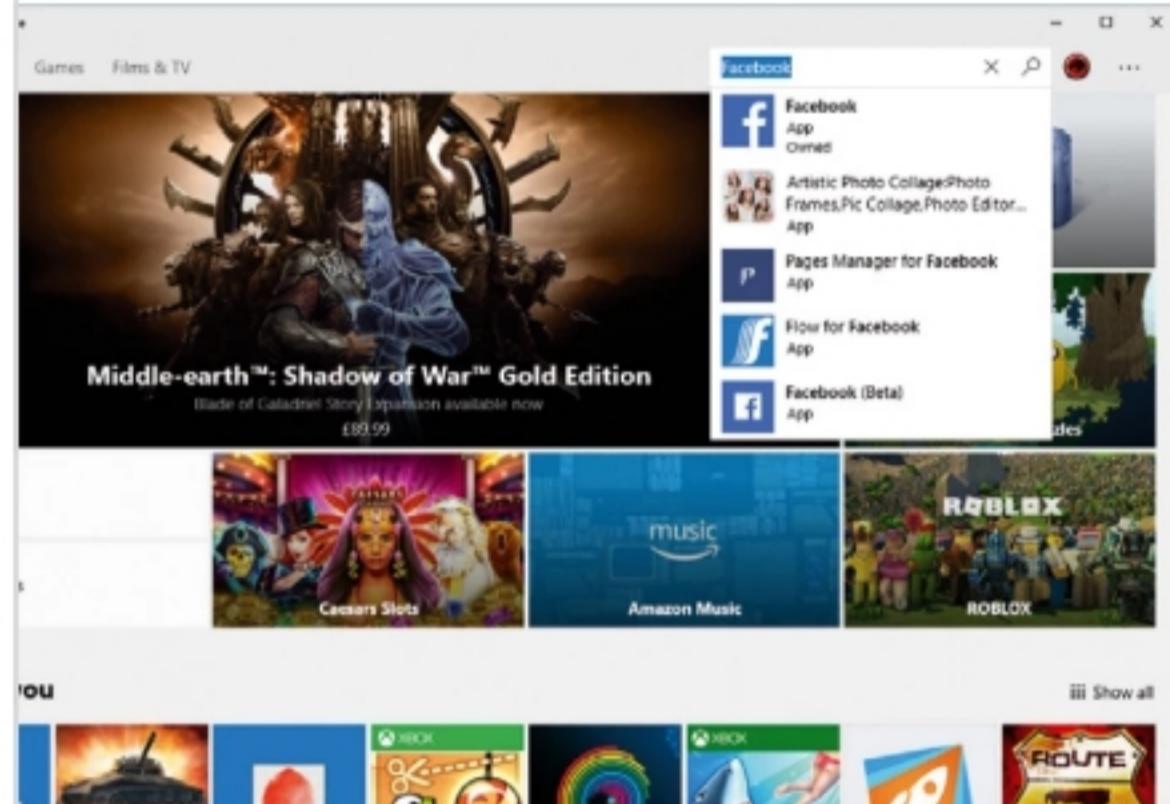
Step 2 The Store front details the specifics regarding the app you're currently viewing, Facebook in this instance. Scroll down through the app's page to view a description, any updated information, system requirements, additional information and what functionality the app uses, in case you're concerned over privacy and such.
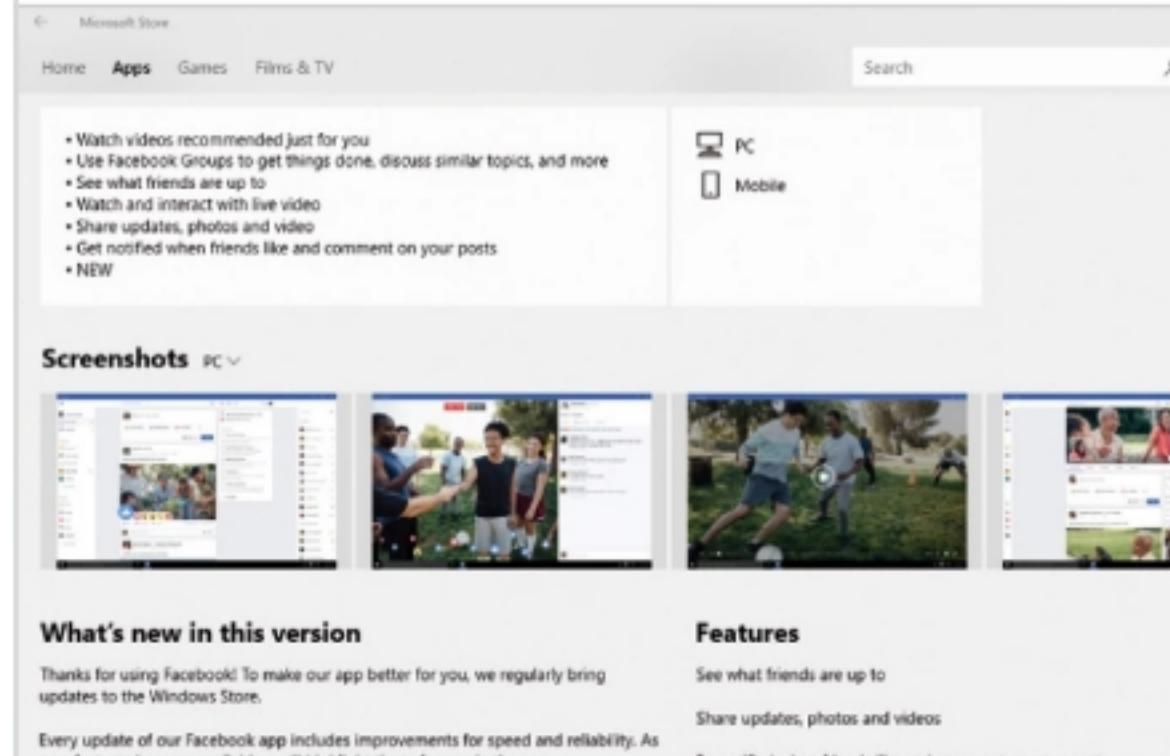
Step 3 Scroll back to the top of the Facebook app page in the Store. To install the app on to your PC, simply click the blue-coloured Install button. This will initiate the download and installation process. The Facebook app weighs in at around 140MB, which isn't too hefty for a modern app.
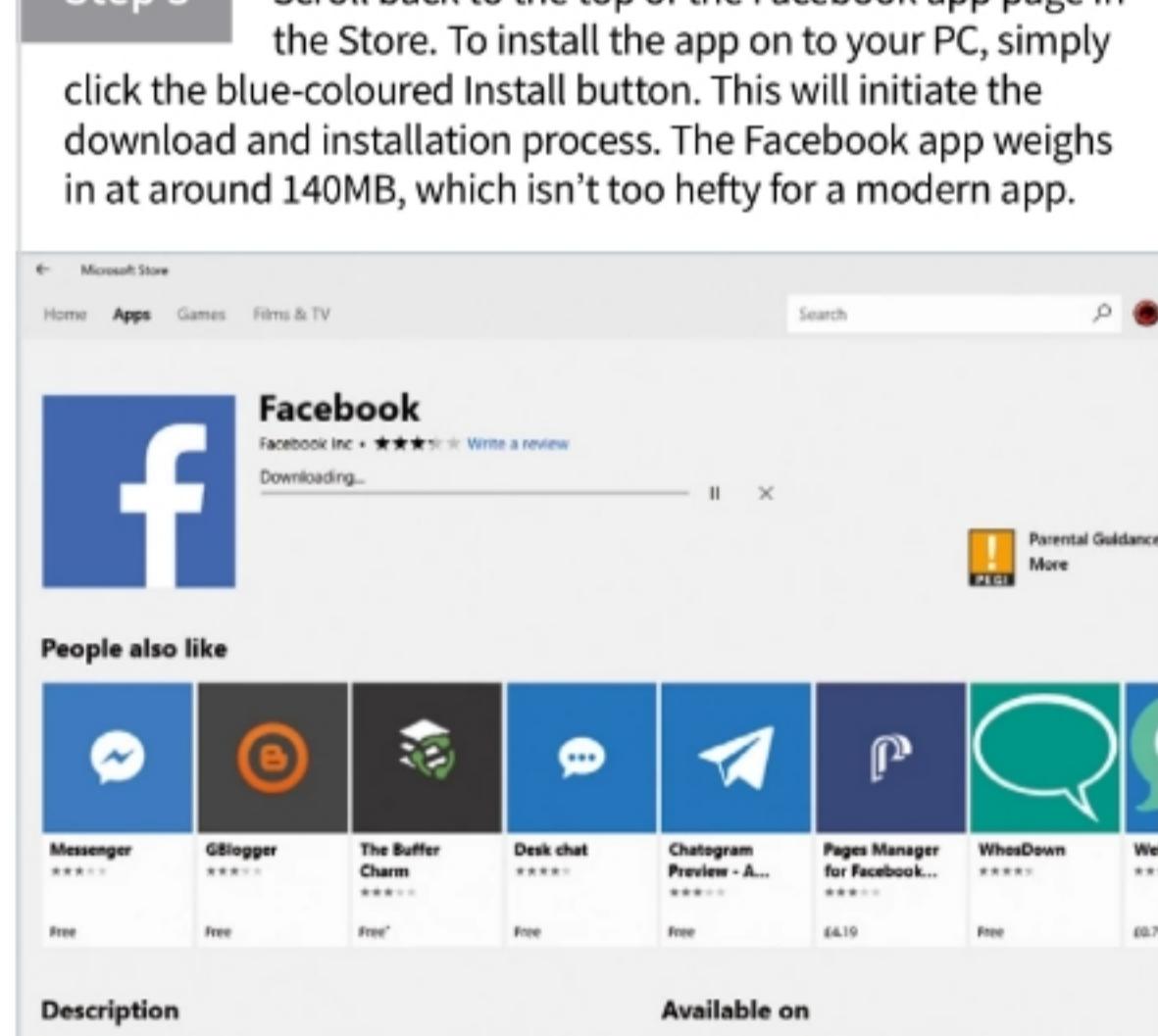
Step 4 Once the installation process is complete, you receive a brief notification in the bottom right of your Windows desktop. There are two options available from the notification, Launch and Pin to Start. While you can Launch the app right away, we recommend clicking Pin to Start. This will place the app in the available Groups from the Start button.
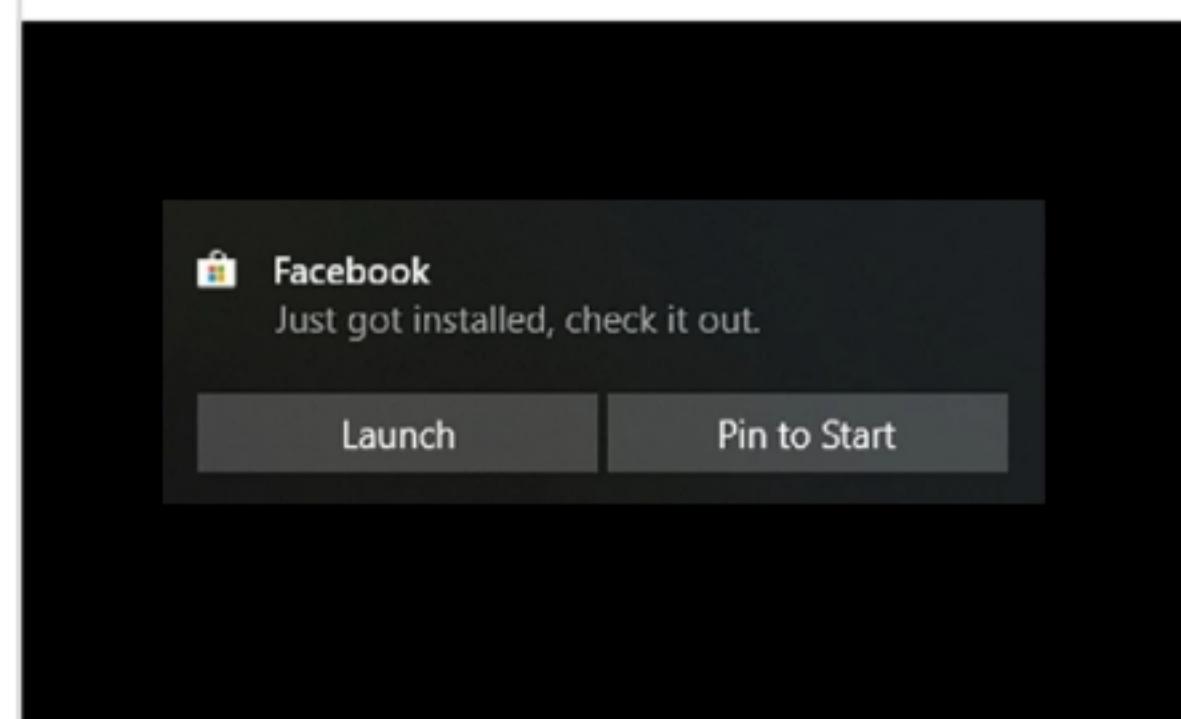
Spelling Options

Before you send an email, you can always spell check it – this is integrated into Mail under the Options tab. You can select the language you need (you might be emailing a hotel in France so using French, for example) and correct any spelling errors as you go.

Change Zoom

If the text in emails is too small for you, you can zoom in to your messages – again, this is also accessed through the ··· menu. A handy keyboard shortcut for zooming in is Ctrl-+ to zoom in or use Ctrl and – to zoom out. This actually works in most apps, including many web browsers, too!
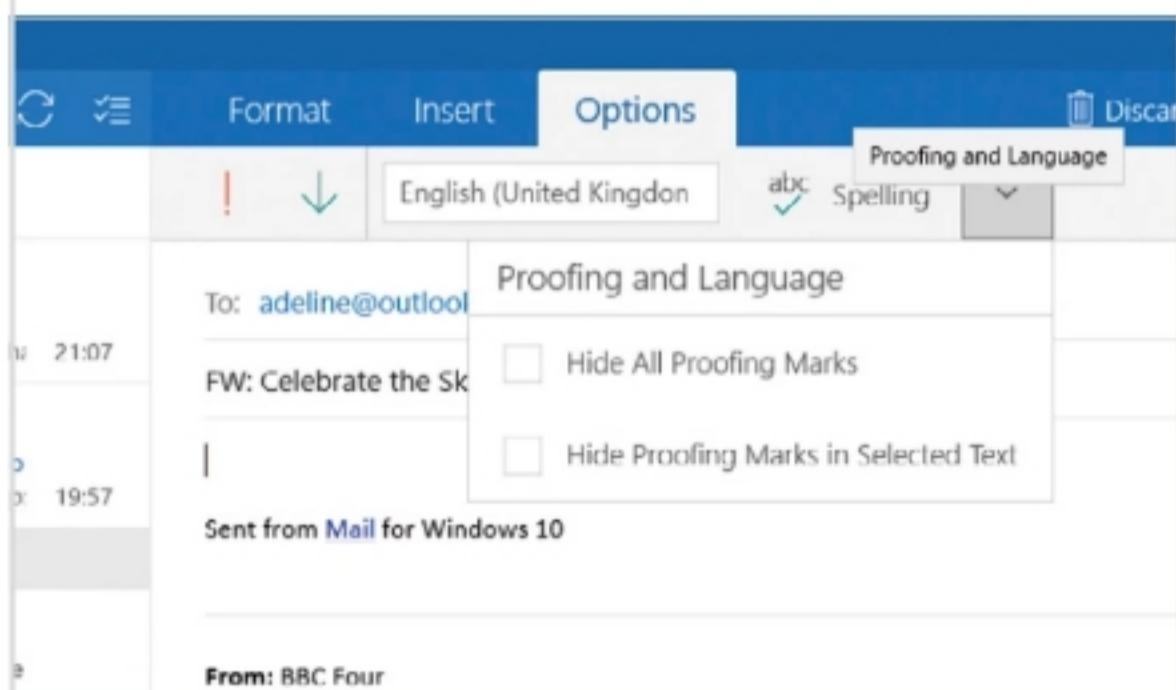
Email Menu

As well as the basic reply, reply all, forward, archive and delete commands at the top of each email, there's also this extra menu – just click the ··· button. You can move to the next email or previous message if you want to do that, but crucially you can also move your email into a folder.

Right-Click

Even if you're not actually looking at a particular email, you can still perform numerous actions on it. You can right-click on emails to move, archive or delete them or mark them as read/unread. If you're deleting emails, you can also just select them and use the delete key (we find this is actually the easiest way).
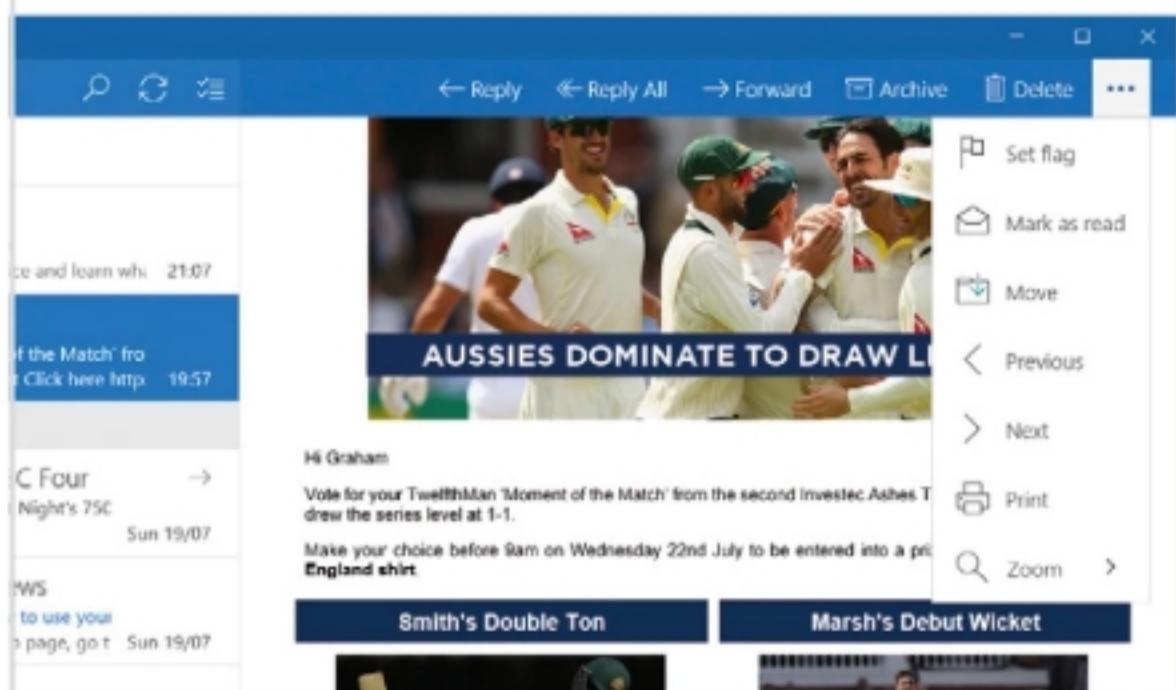
Move Folder

If you chose to move your email in the previous step, you'll see this browser view which enables you to add your email to an existing folder. You can always create a new folder for storing emails in particular categories. If you just want to remove your email from the inbox but still keep it, use Archive.
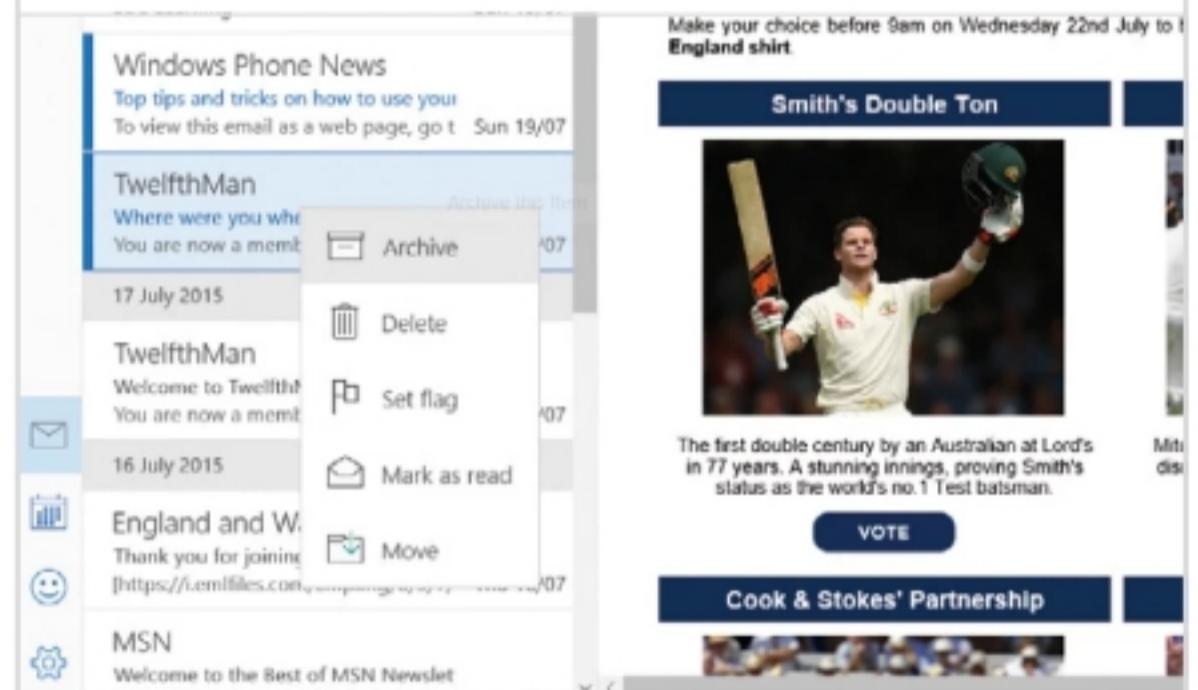
Print it Off

From this menu you can also print off emails – this will open the now-standard Windows print dialog box which is now black (presumably to make the predominantly white print preview stand out). You can select to print off the whole email or just the first page, as well as browse through the pages using the controls at the top.
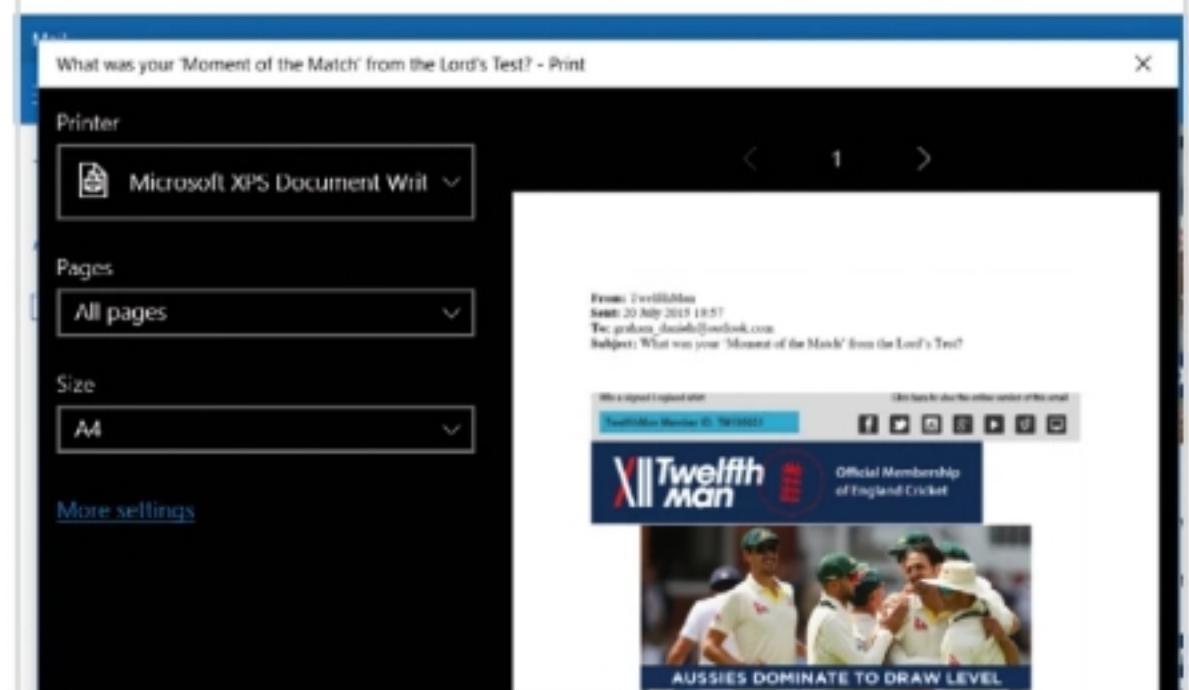
Edit Text

As well as just writing simple plain text emails, there are plenty more editing functions in Mail, which we'll check out in the next few steps. Using the Format tab at the top of the editing window, you can change selected text – here we've used bold to highlight a particular phrase.


More Text Options

As well as styles, Bold, Italic and Underline, there are other ways you can make text stand out or add emphasis. As in Word, you can have subscript or superscript text or add highlighting (quite useful for quick editing of paragraphs in emails). Finally, you can clear the formatting of any selected text.

Apply Styles

There are also various pre-defined styles you can apply to text – useful if you're writing a long email and you need to have sub-headings or headlines in the text. These work very similarly to styles in Microsoft Office; styles that you might use for a report or essay.
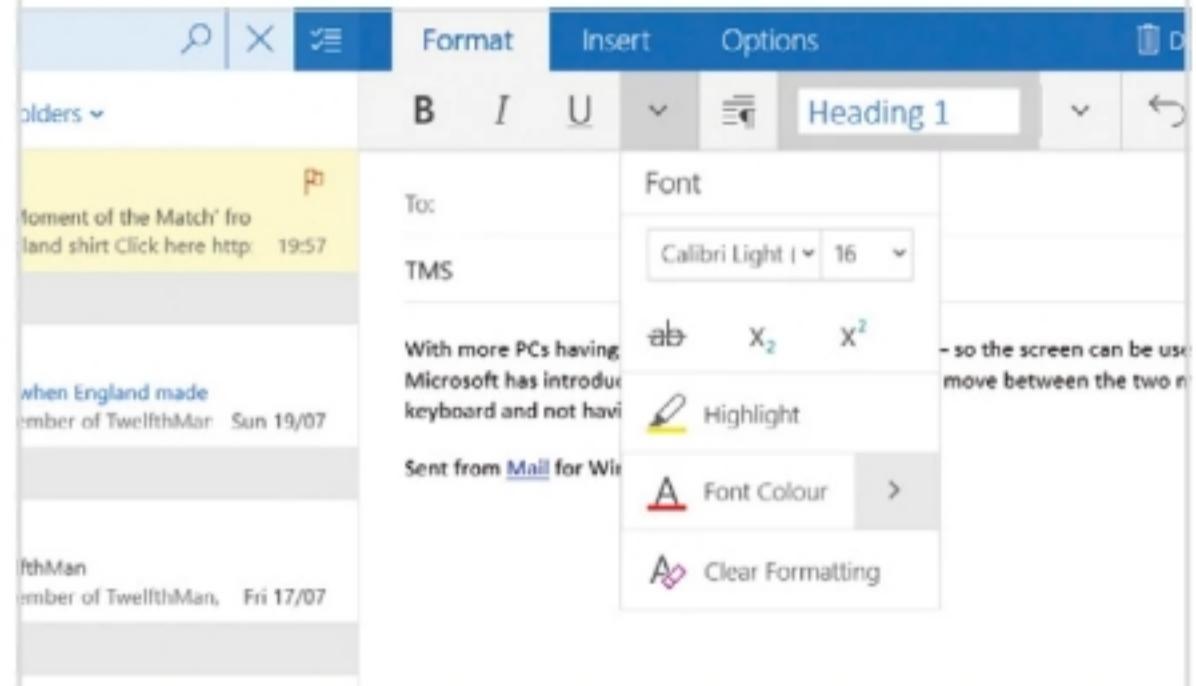
Change Colour

You're able to easily change the colour of the text in your email and, while you still have a limited range to choose from, you've still got a lot of choice (far more than in many other apps, anyway). Strangely Windows chooses to take most of these colours from your current Windows theme. No, we're not sure why, either.

Define Styles

You can browse through these styles using the drop-down arrow next to the style selection box. As well as fairly standard styles, there are some other ways you can get text to stand out including quotes and what are called 'Intense' styles, which place quotes in between parallel lines to encourage reading.
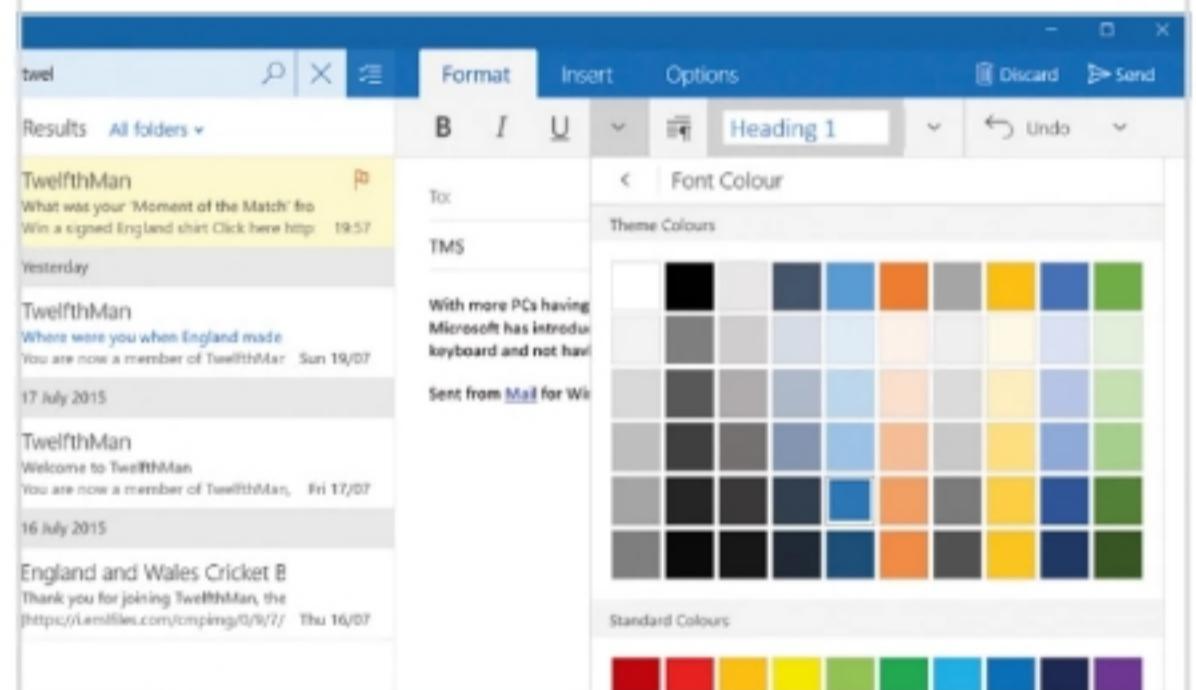

Inserting Images

As well as the button to include attachments, the Insert tab features a Picture button so you can insert an image into your email, as opposed to just sending it as an attached file. Once inserted, you can select it with your mouse and adjust its size (drag the corners as you can see here).
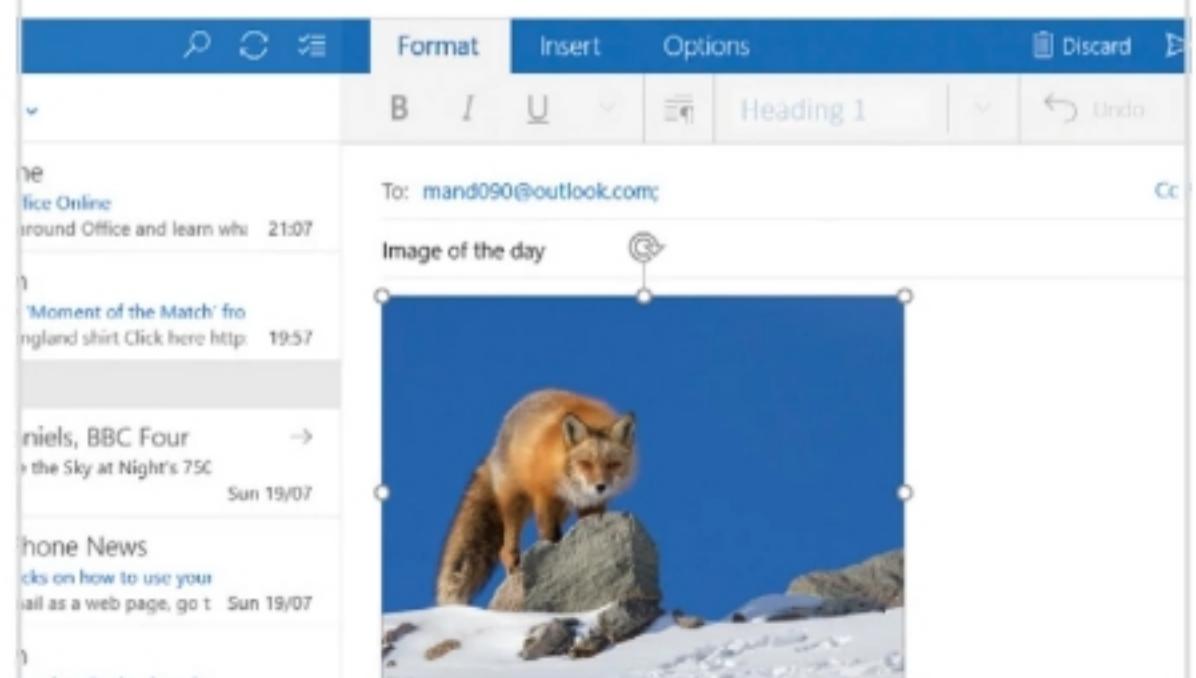
Google Accounts

If you're adding a Google account, you'll get this somewhat familiar pop-up appearing inviting you to enter your username and password. If you have Google's two-step authentication enabled, you'll get a text message to confirm your identity and you'll be asked to enter it.
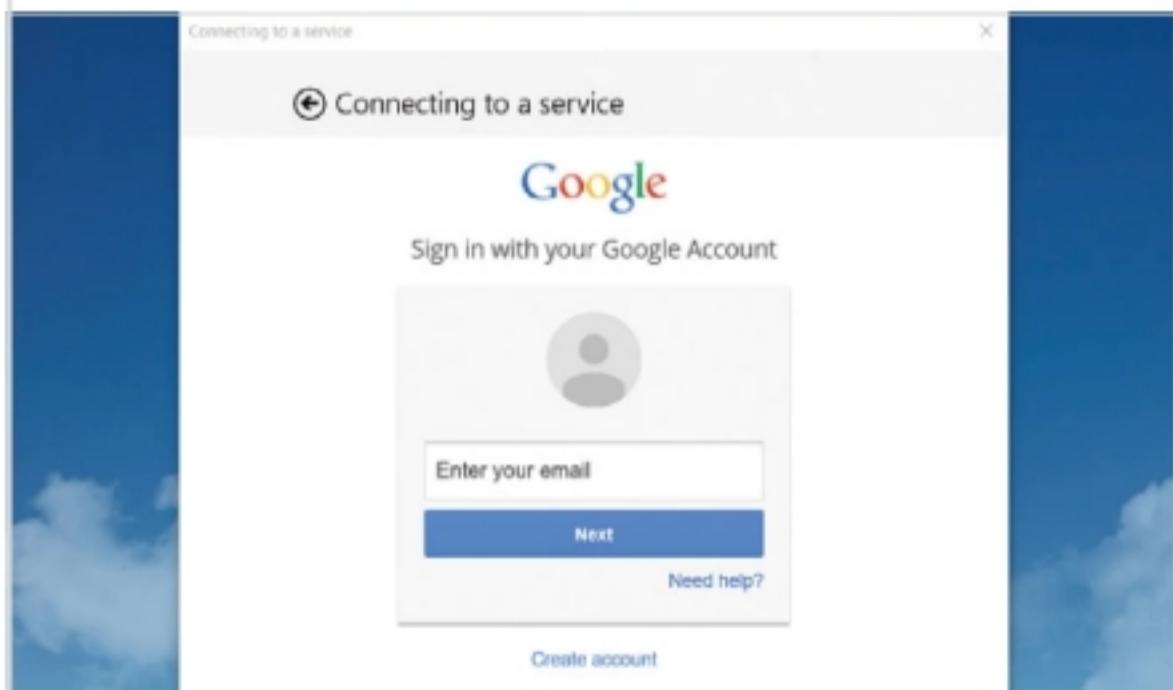

Microsoft Accounts

As we said before, normally your Microsoft account will have already pulled in automatically. If not, you can add it manually. Just enter your email address and password. If you don't already have a Microsoft account, you can set one up from here by clicking the link and following the steps.
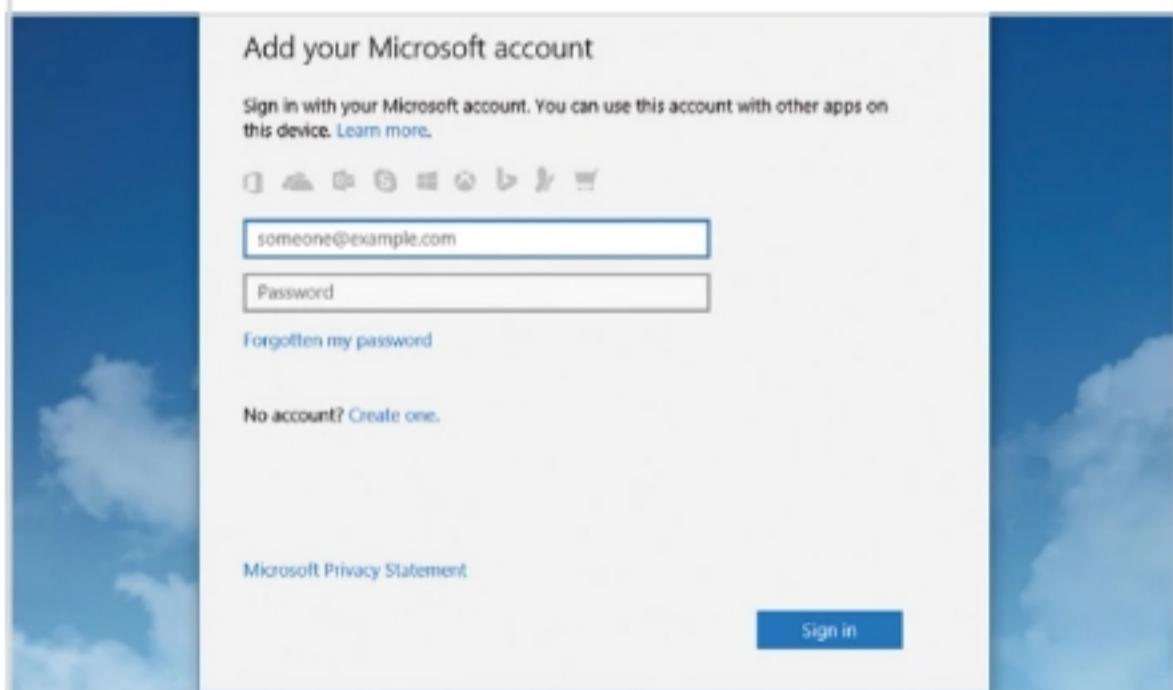

Your Inbox

Here's your inbox! Your email list is shown on the left, with the contents of each email appearing on the right. We have three new emails here, designated by the blue colour. You can also search for any emails using the search box at the top – this works much more quickly than in older apps.
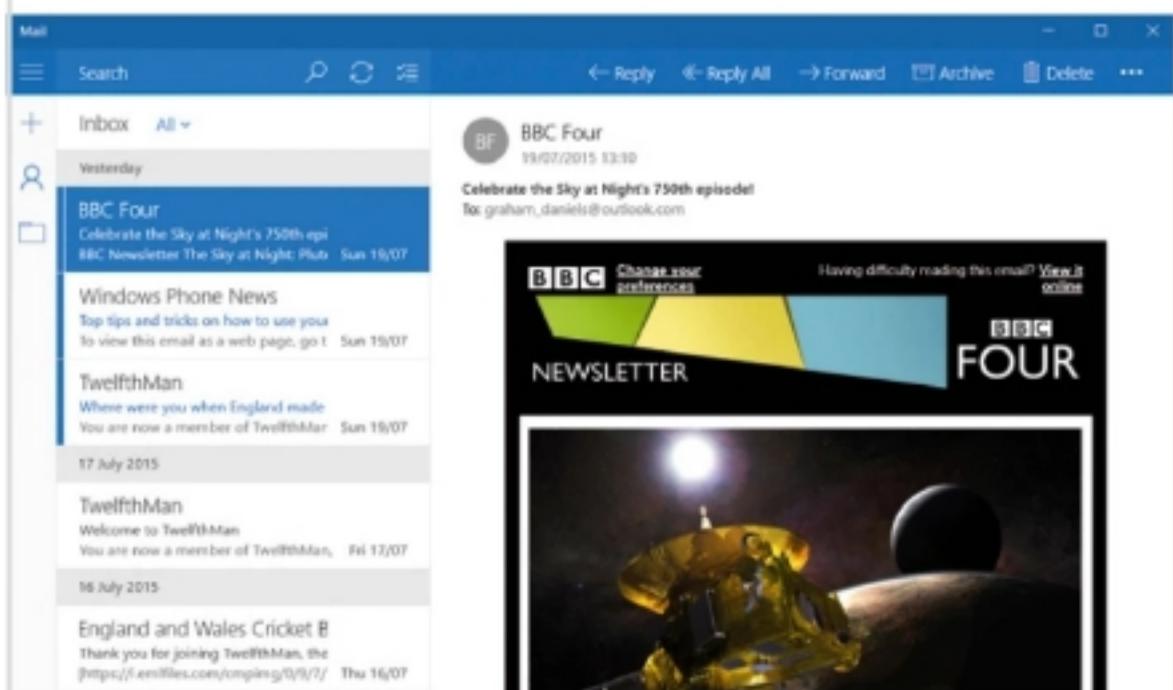
Writing a Mail

There's also a Refresh button as well as a Select mode, so you can select various emails (with a view to moving or deleting them). Now we've clicked the Forward button along the top to forward this email. As you can see, this has created a draft under the original email on the left.
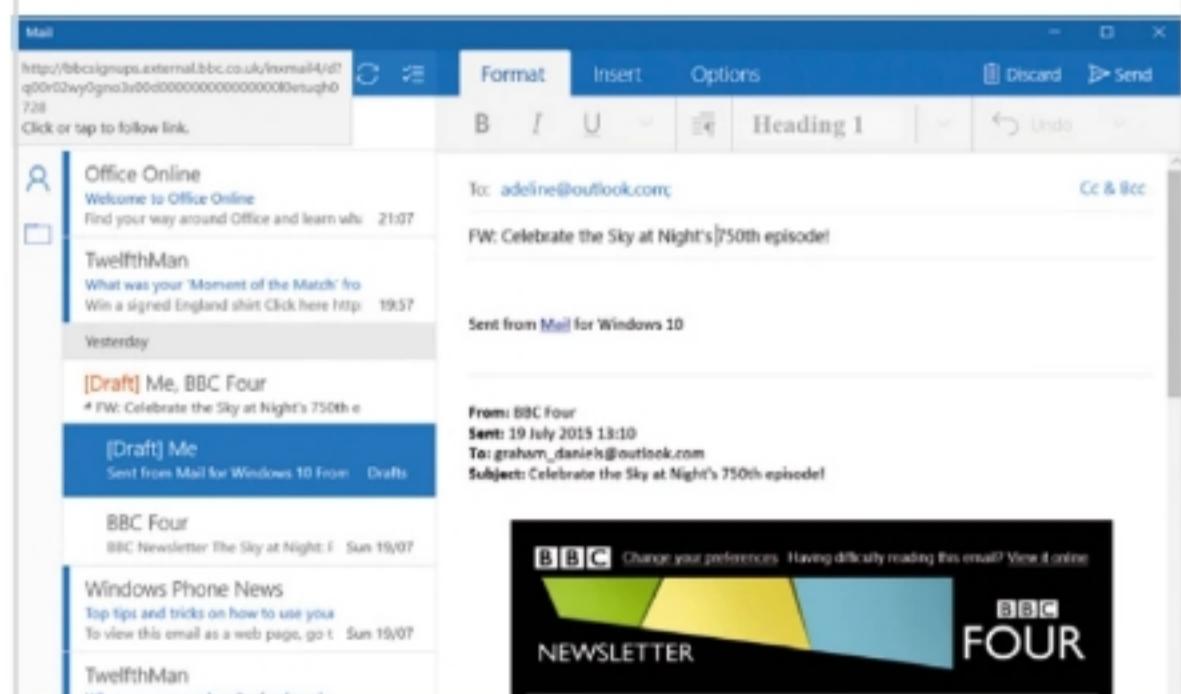
Insert Attachment

Emails are 'grouped' like this in Mail, meaning that if you and a friend have a conversation, all the emails will be grouped together so that they're easy to retrieve. You'll notice we're still composing our email here, and we've clicked the Attach button to select an attachment.
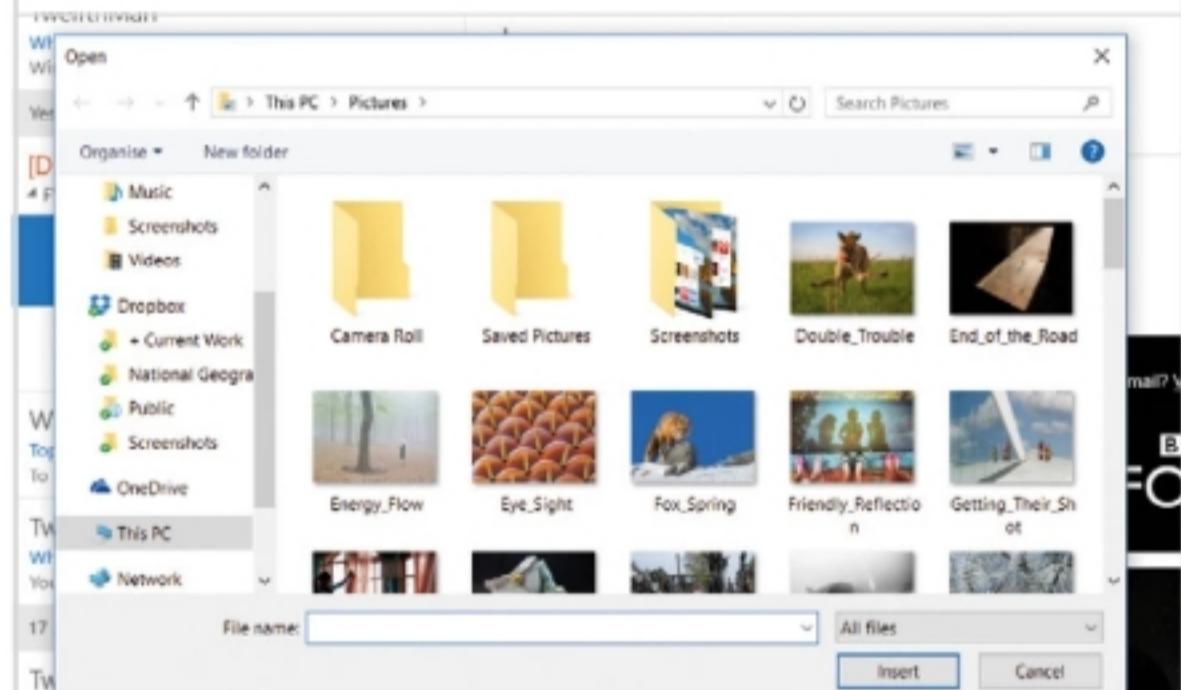
Sent Mail

This is what a sent mail looks like. As you can see, it's now 'nested' under our original email and the sender is me (or you). You're able to look at just sent items in your folder still, and we'll show you how to do that in a few steps.
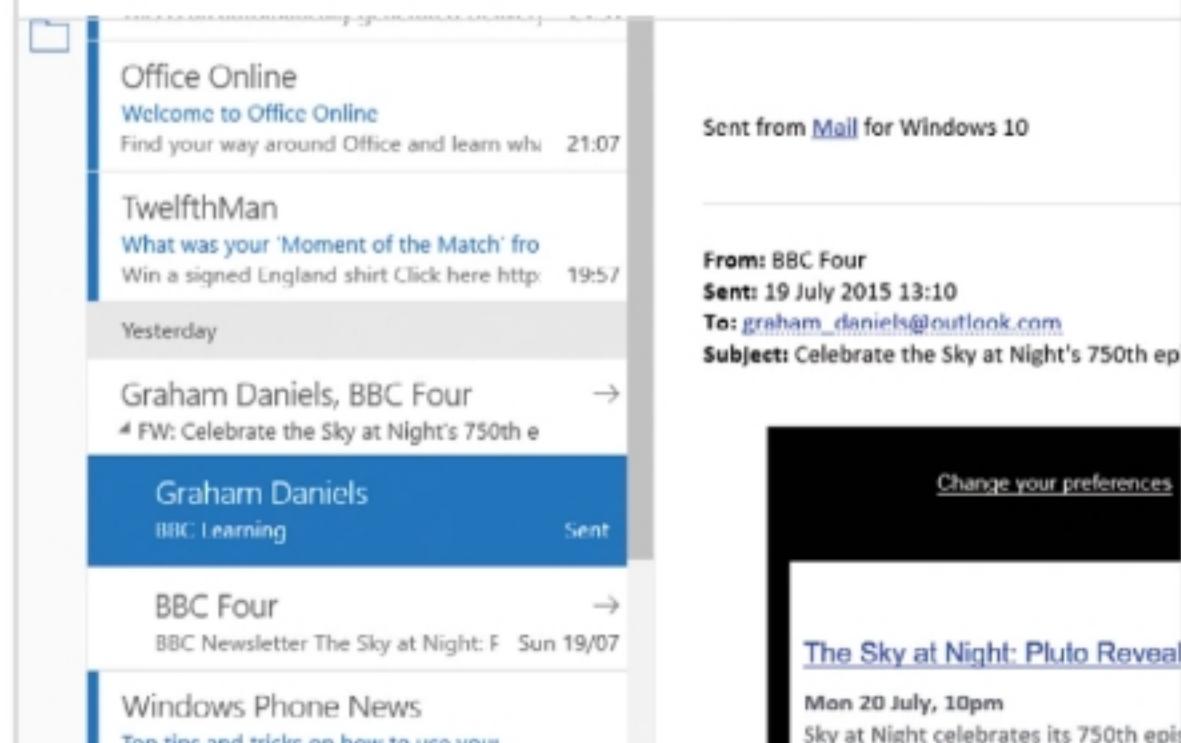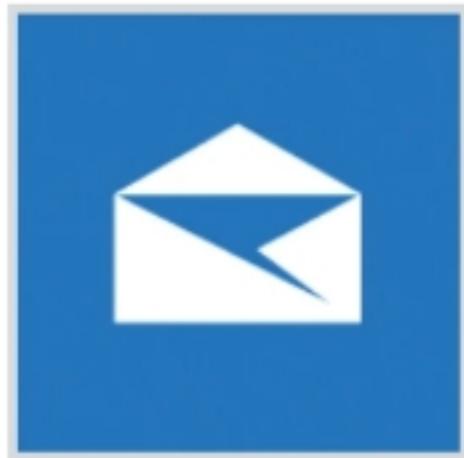
How to Set Up and Use the Mail App

The Windows 10 new email client is a lot different from previous apps such as Outlook Express. It's a relatively recent idea for you to have all your emails in one place, whether it's your work account, a Hotmail or Outlook address or email from Gmail.

Meet Your New Email Client

Mail has been completely redesigned for Windows 10 and is wholly unrecognisable from the Windows 8 equivalent (that's a good thing). But even with these improvements, it still needs a bit of tweaking before it comes into its own.

Welcome As it says here, the idea behind the Mail app in Windows 10 is to gather all your emails together in one place to "simplify life a bit". The app is quite clever in how it handles email and it certainly differs to older apps such as Windows Live Mail and Outlook Express.
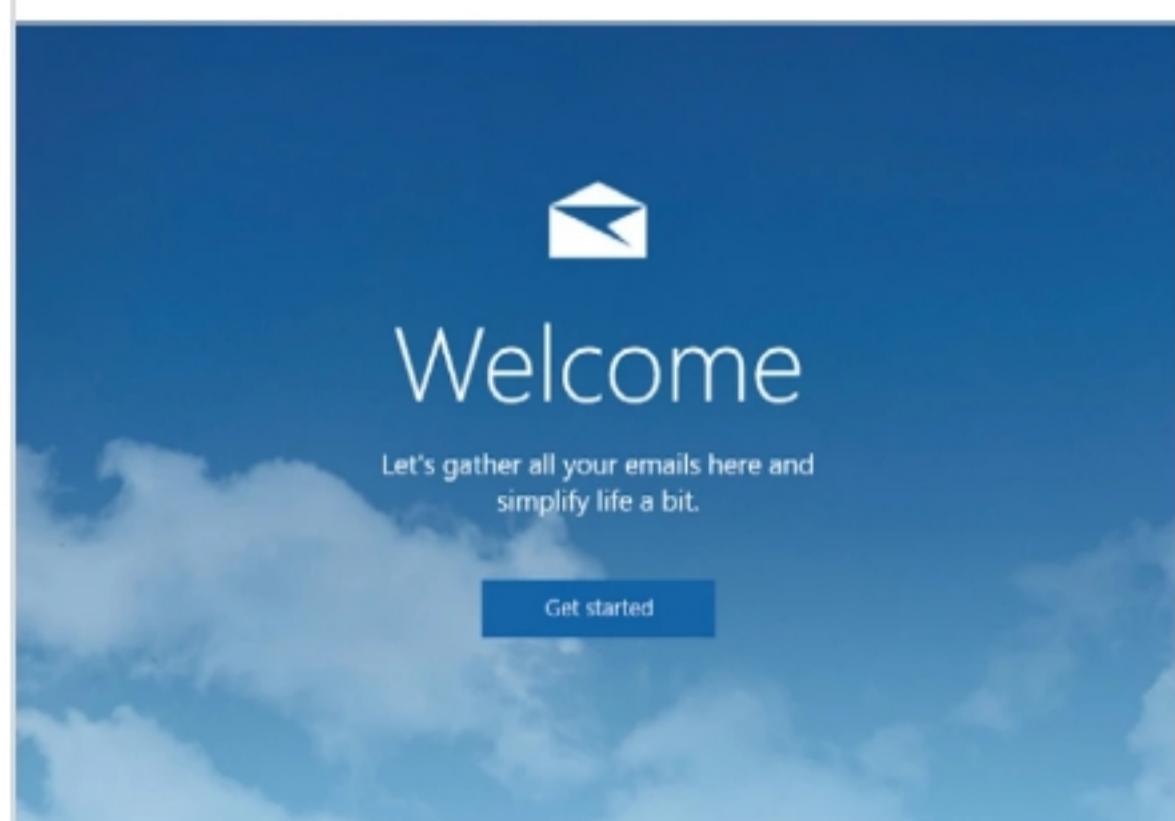
Account Type If you click Add Account, you can add accounts from many popular providers including Google, Yahoo and Apple's iCloud. You can also set up other more specialist accounts if you have the details. Finally, there's also an option to add a Microsoft Exchange account if your workplace uses that (including Office 365).
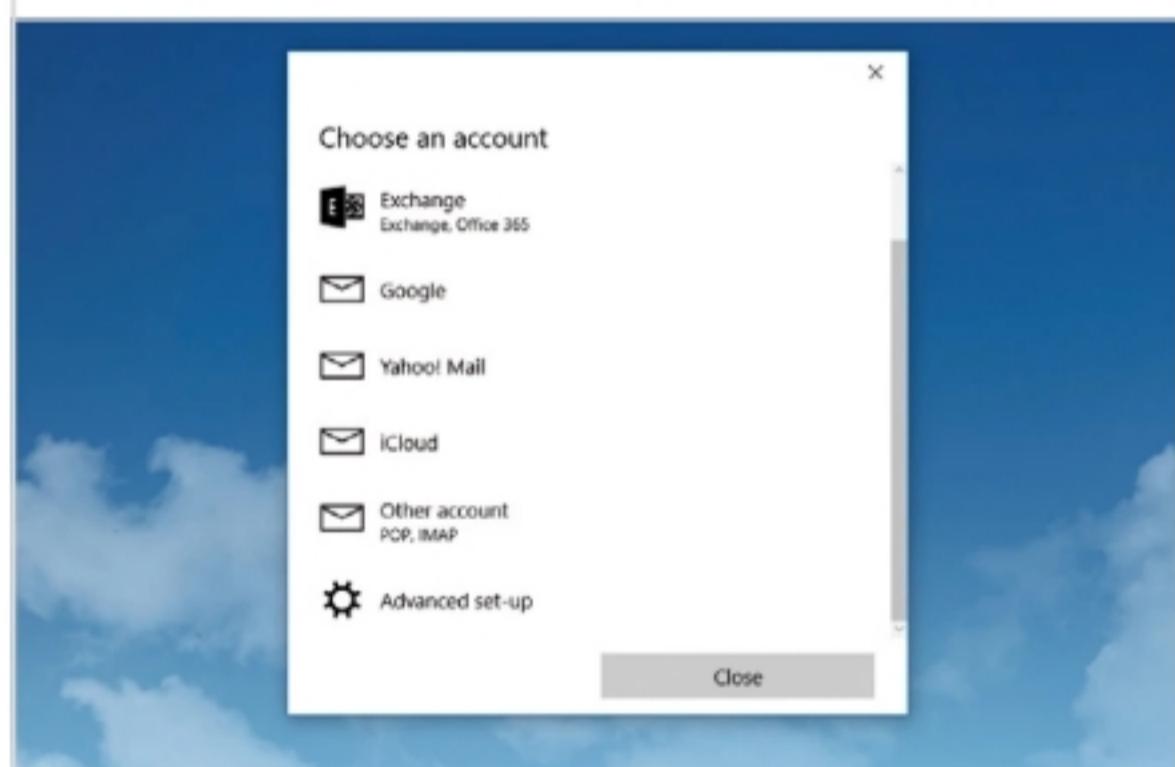
Default Account If you signed into Windows 10 with a Microsoft account, the Mail app will automatically pull this in if it's enabled for email. As you can see, you can also click Add Account if you have other email accounts you want to add (this can be from basically anywhere as long as it's your account).
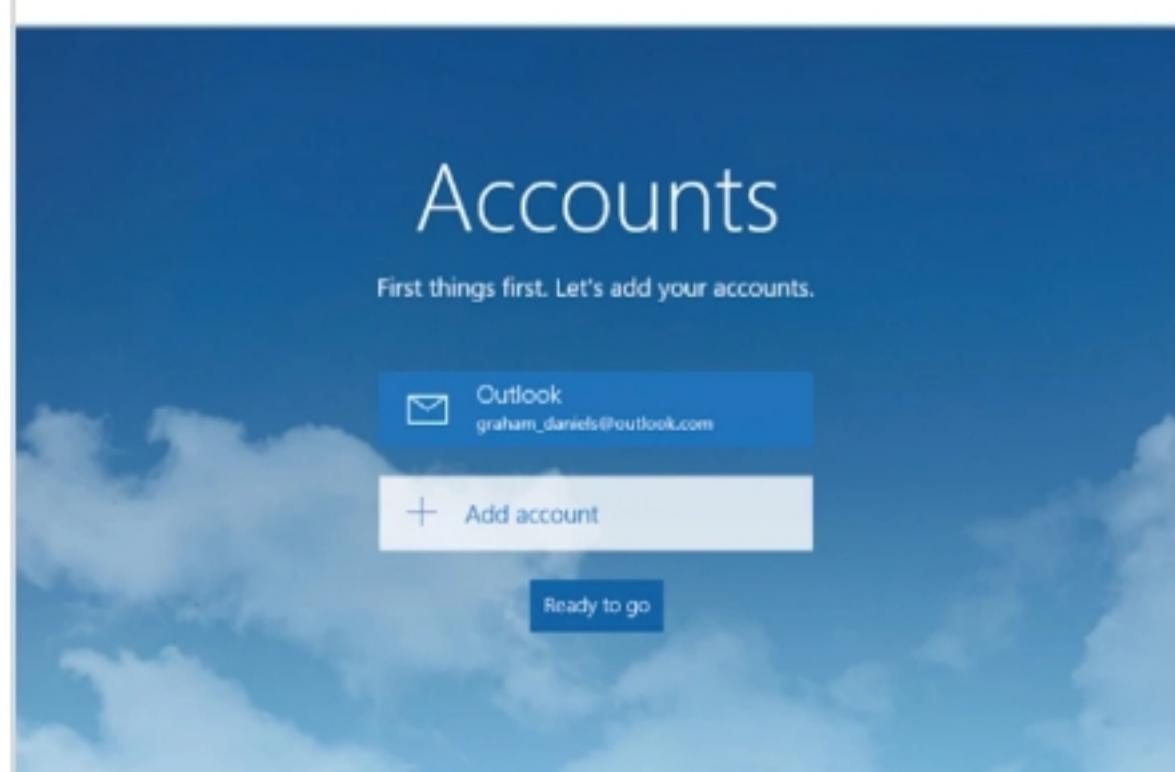
Advanced Set-up If you need to select the Advanced Set-up option, you can choose between the type of account you're setting up. Usually you'll select the Internet Email option – this includes accounts that use the POP3 or IMAP protocols to retrieve email (if your provider gives you the choice of which of those to use, select IMAP).
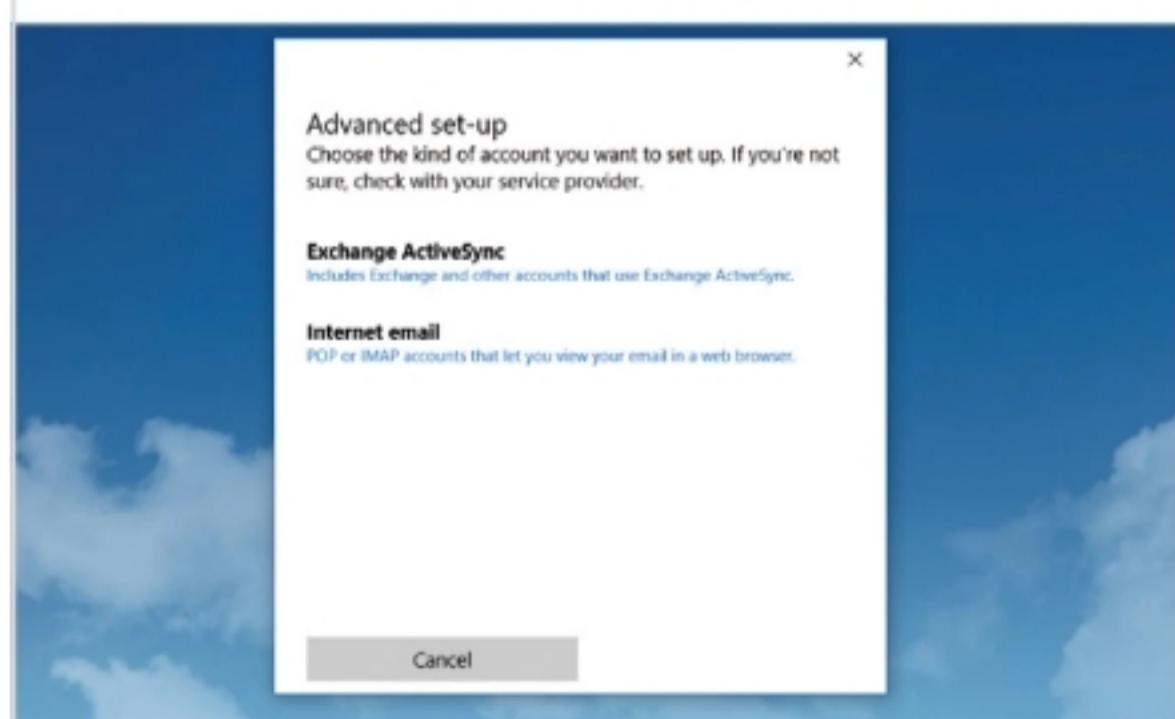
CUSTOMISE MAIL

You can customise how the Email app looks in a number of ways, from simple changes like choosing between a light and dark theme, to setting the overall colour and changing the background image for the app. To personalise the Mail app, click the Settings button and select "Personalisation".

Message Options

In a row along the top of the main message window are the message options. These include Reply, Reply All, Forward, Archive and Delete emails; more options can be seen by clicking the Menu button to the right. The message options only appear when viewing a received message.

Message Tools

Roll over or click on any of the messages in your inbox, sent items or drafts folders and three icons will appear. These let you quickly Archive, Delete or Flag any message directly in the folder panel. Archived messages can be recovered at any time and returned to the inbox if required.

Main Message Window

When you start a new email or select an email in one of the mail folders, it will appear in the main message window. As you would normally, you can scroll down to view all of the messages shown. You can roll over the address in the To: field, to see more contact details.

Taskbar Icon

Whenever you open an app in Windows 10, a highlighted taskbar icon will appear at the bottom of the screen. This makes it easy to switch between multiple open apps, or to quickly see which apps are currently running. You can pin your most used apps to the taskbar by right-clicking and selecting Pin to taskbar.

Explore the Email App in Windows 10

Long gone are the days of Microsoft Outlook Express being included with new releases of the OS, replaced instead by the Microsoft Mail app. This app first appeared in Windows 8, was vastly improved in 8.1 and has now been improved yet again for Windows 10.

New Mail Button

If you are not replying to an email, but rather starting a new email, you can do so in a couple of different ways. You can either click the New Mail button at the top of the Mail Menu or you can use the Ctrl-N. Both methods open a new email in the main window, with a blank recipient field.

Mail Menu

The left-hand menu, which can be minimised and expanded using the button at the top of the panel, contains all of your email accounts (those you have added to Windows Mail). Click on any of your email account headers and the individual folders, such as Inbox and Sent Items, are displayed here also.

Calendar View

You can open the Windows Calendar app directly from within the Mail app. Click the Mail app icon at the bottom of the Mail Menu panel and the calendar screen will open in a second window. If you have never used the Calendar app before, you will need to link it to an account.

Mail Settings

The settings for the Mail app allow you to easily add accounts, change how emails are displayed when they arrive, whether outgoing emails have a signature (which can be customised) added to them, as well as how you are notified of new emails in Windows 10.

Mail Folder

The messages in whichever email folder you have selected are shown in this panel. By default, the most recent emails are at the top of the list. You can change how the emails are viewed, so that only unread or flagged emails are displayed, using the dropdown menu at the top of the inbox.

Step 5 Sometimes you might want to make sure a folder doesn't show up on a device for privacy reasons. In the OneDrive Activity Center, select the Settings gear. Next to the location where you want to choose folders, click Choose folders. Clear the check box next to the folder you want to keep off this device.
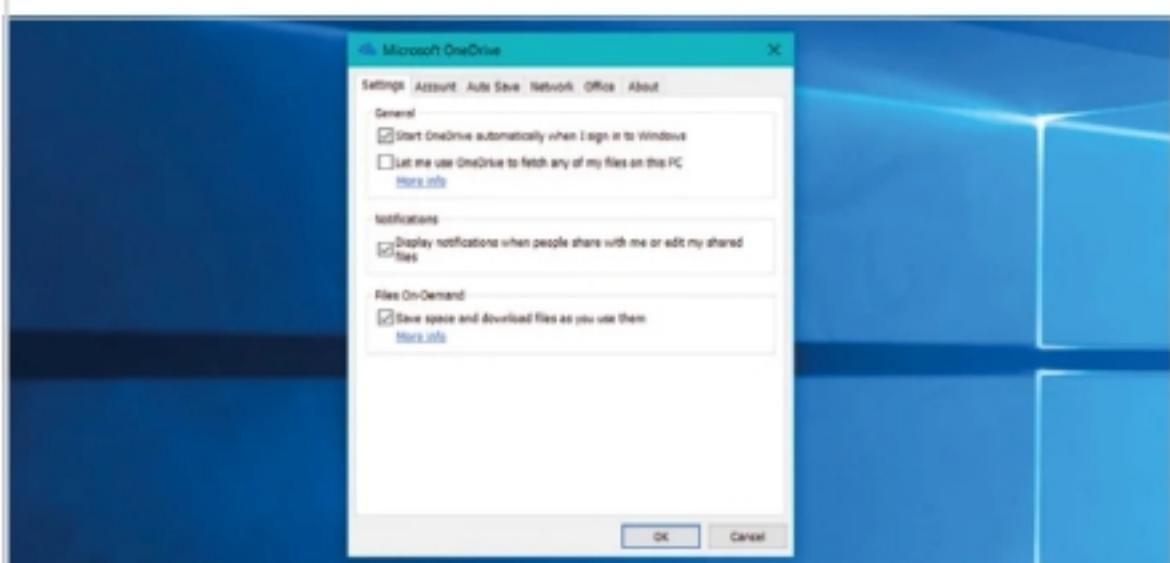
Step 6 When you delete an online-only file from your device, you delete it from your OneDrive on all devices and online. You can restore deleted files and folders from your OneDrive recycle bin on the web for up to 30 days. If you delete a locally available file, it also appears in your device recycle bin.
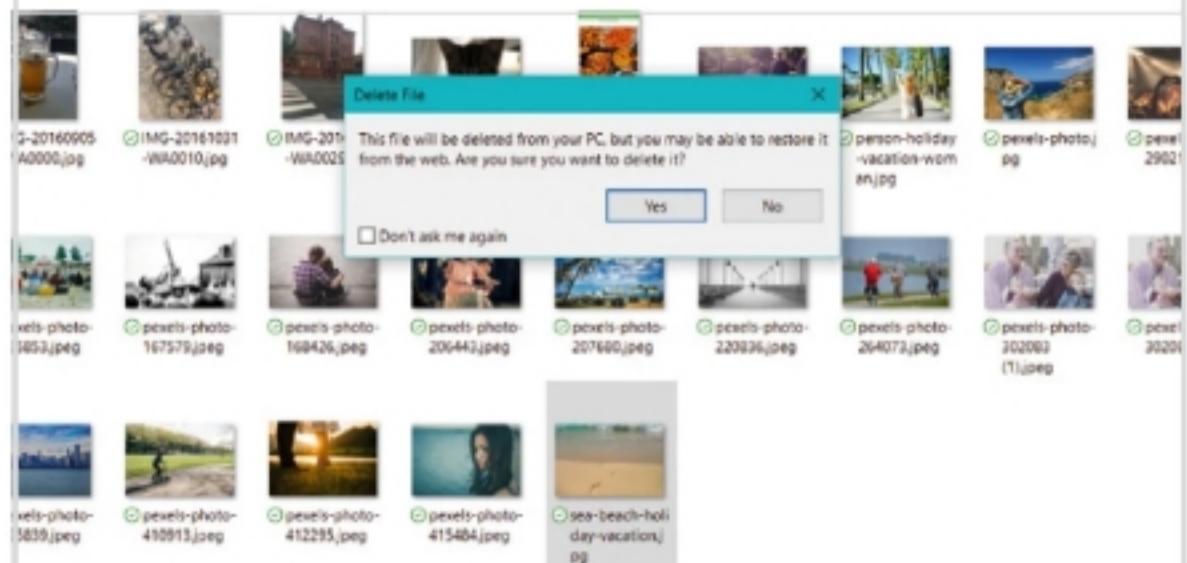
On-Demand Files

Once the Files On-Demand is set up, you can access everything from within the File Explorer in Windows 10. You can also access them through the OneDrive taskbar icon.

Viewing Files When you turn on Files On-Demand, you see all your files in File Explorer and get new information about each file. New files created online or on another device appear as online-only files, which don't take up space on your device. When you're connected to the Internet, you'll be able to use the files like every other file on your device.
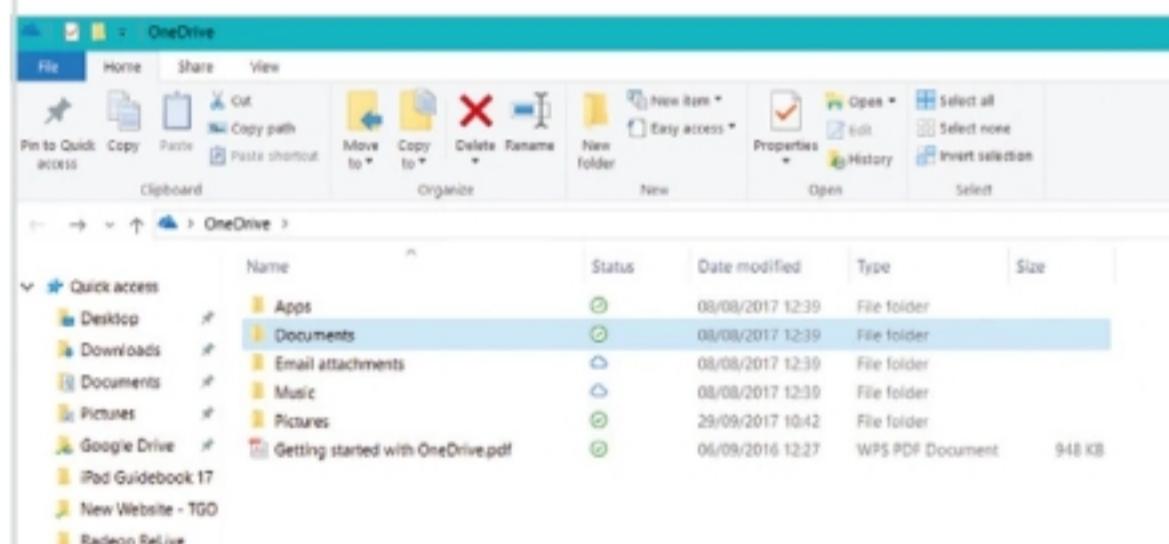

Locally Available Files When you open an online-only file, it downloads to your device and becomes a locally available file. You can open a locally available file anytime, even without Internet access. If you need more space, you can change the file back to online-only.
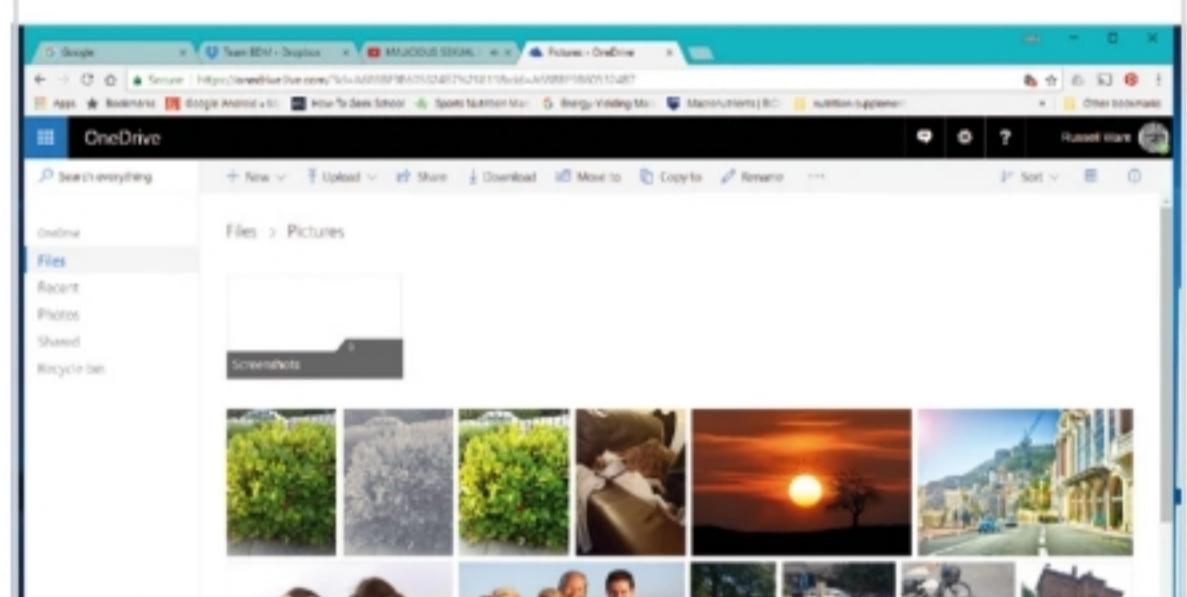
Online-only Files Online-only files don't take up space on your computer. You see a cloud icon for each online-only file in File Explorer but the file doesn't download to your device until you open it. You can only open online-only files when your device is connected to the Internet.
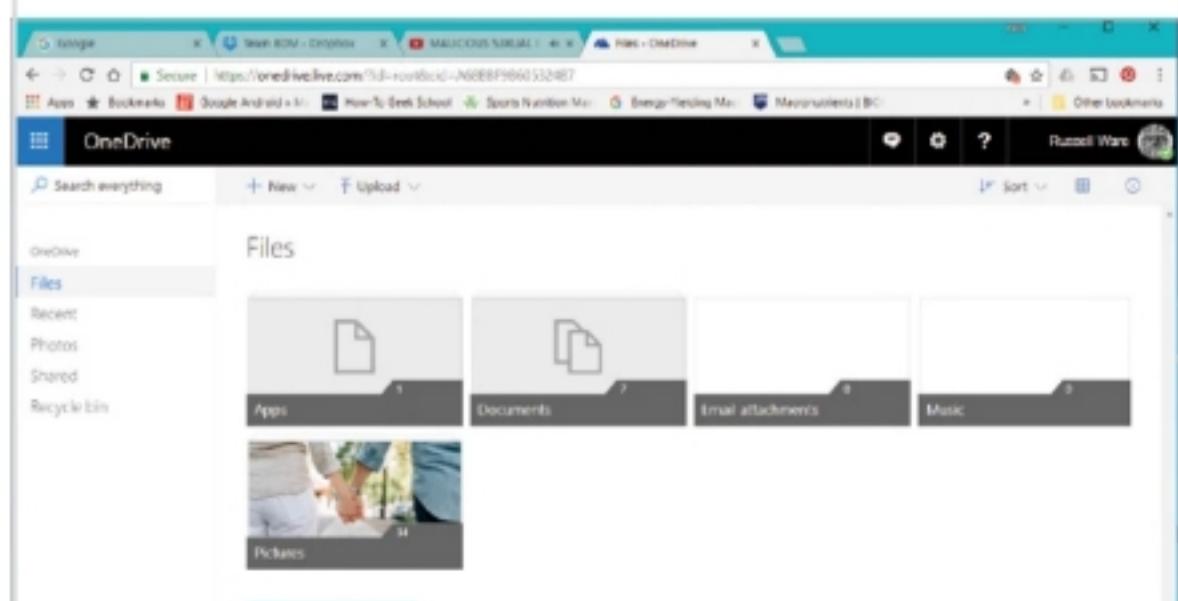
Always Available Files Only files that you mark as 'Always keep on this device' have the green circle with the white check mark. These files will always be available even when you're offline. They are downloaded to your device and take up space.
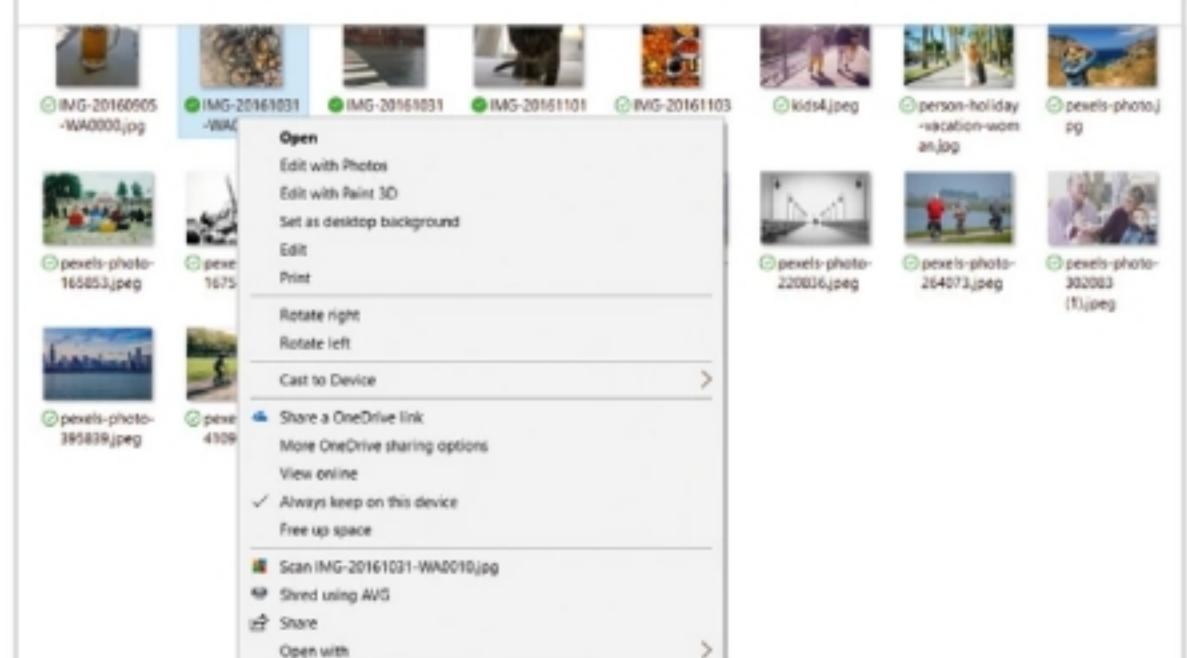
OneDrive – Using the Files On-Demand Tools

With Files On-Demand, you can access all your files in the cloud without having to download them and use storage space on your device. All your files, even online-only files, can be seen in File Explorer and work just like every other file on your device.

Using Files On-Demand

Files On-Demand allows you to access your storage in a much easier and more efficient way, treating cloud-based files as if they are on your PC.

Step 1 First, make sure you are signed in to OneDrive on your computer. Right-click the white OneDrive cloud icon in the notification area, at the far right of the taskbar. If you don't see the OneDrive icon on the taskbar, click the 'Show hidden icons' arrow, also at the bottom right of the screen.

Step 2 You should see a panel pop-up asking if you want to turn on Files On-Demand. If so, click the blue button and wait whilst OneDrive sets this up. If you don't see this panel, click Settings from the OneDrive action menu, click the Settings tab and then check 'Save space and download files…'.
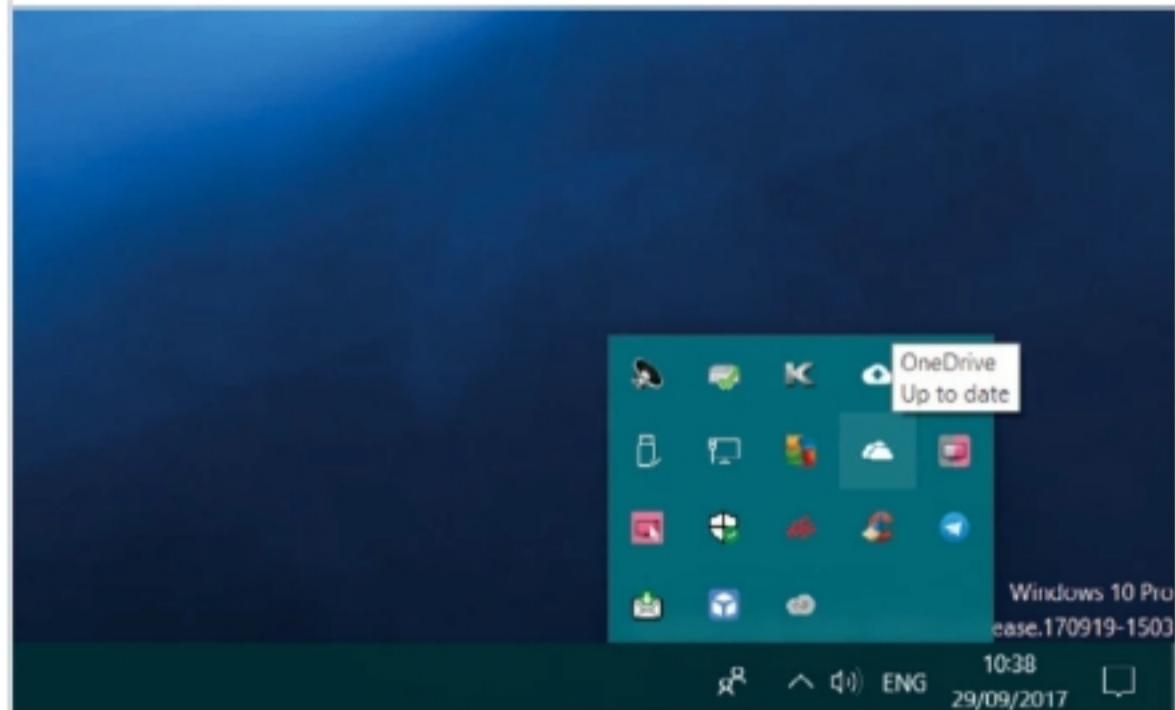

Step 3 You can now open your OneDrive folder to begin checking how your files are currently stored, and to change the status of any you want to move offline or online. You will see the files and folders on OneDrive now have symbols attached to them, showing you their current status.
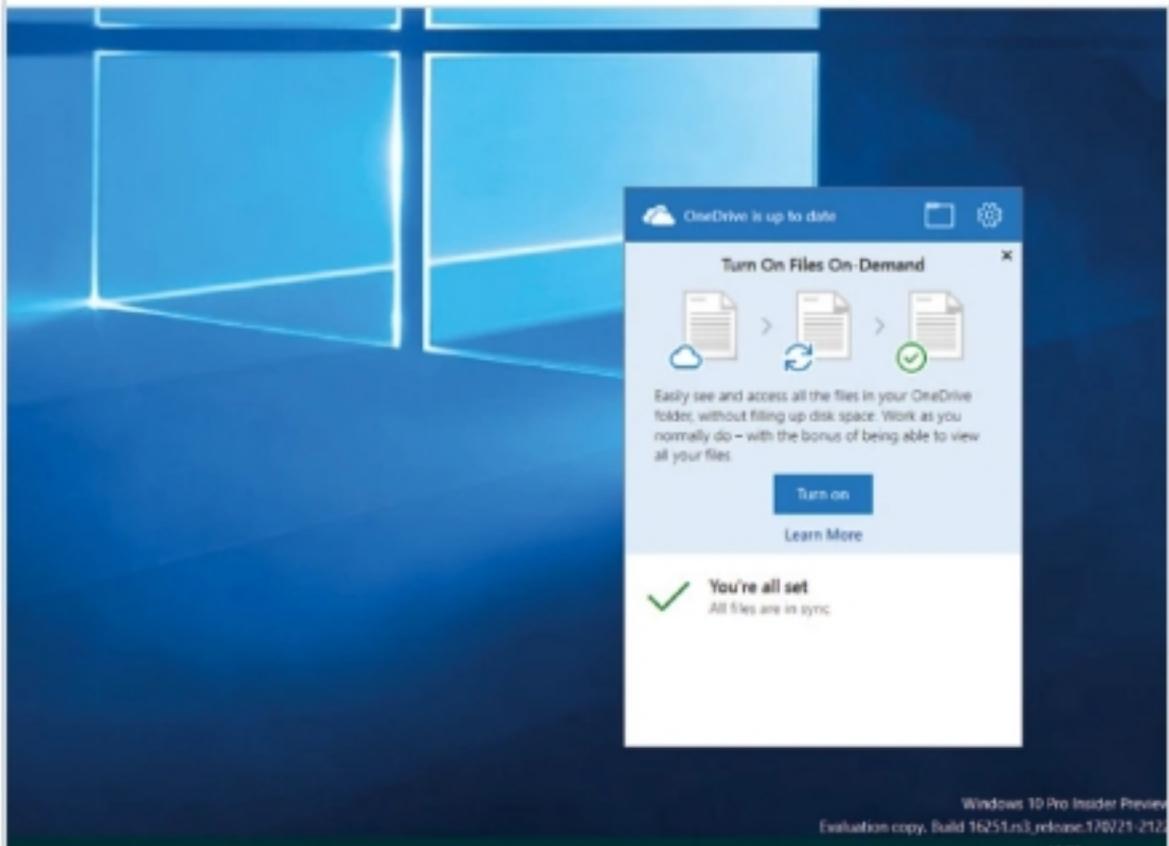

Step 4 To mark a file or folder for offline use or as online-only, right-click on it and look in the action menu for 'Always keep on this device' or 'Free up space' depending on what you wish to do. If you mark a folder as 'Always keep on this device', new files in that folder are set as always available files.
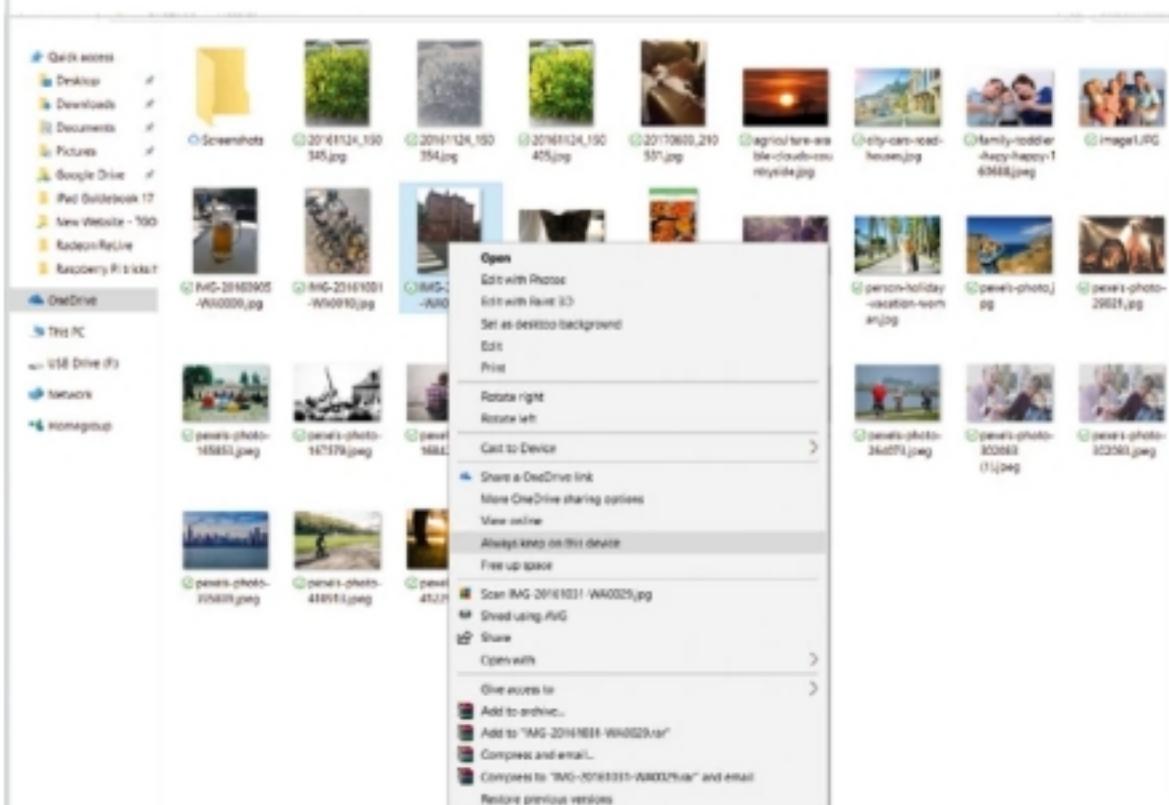
Step 5 When you use the app more, it will learn the types of music you like to listen to and display more of that type (or similar) on the radio screen. You can also create your own radio station by clicking the Create button at the top and searching for artists or genres you like.
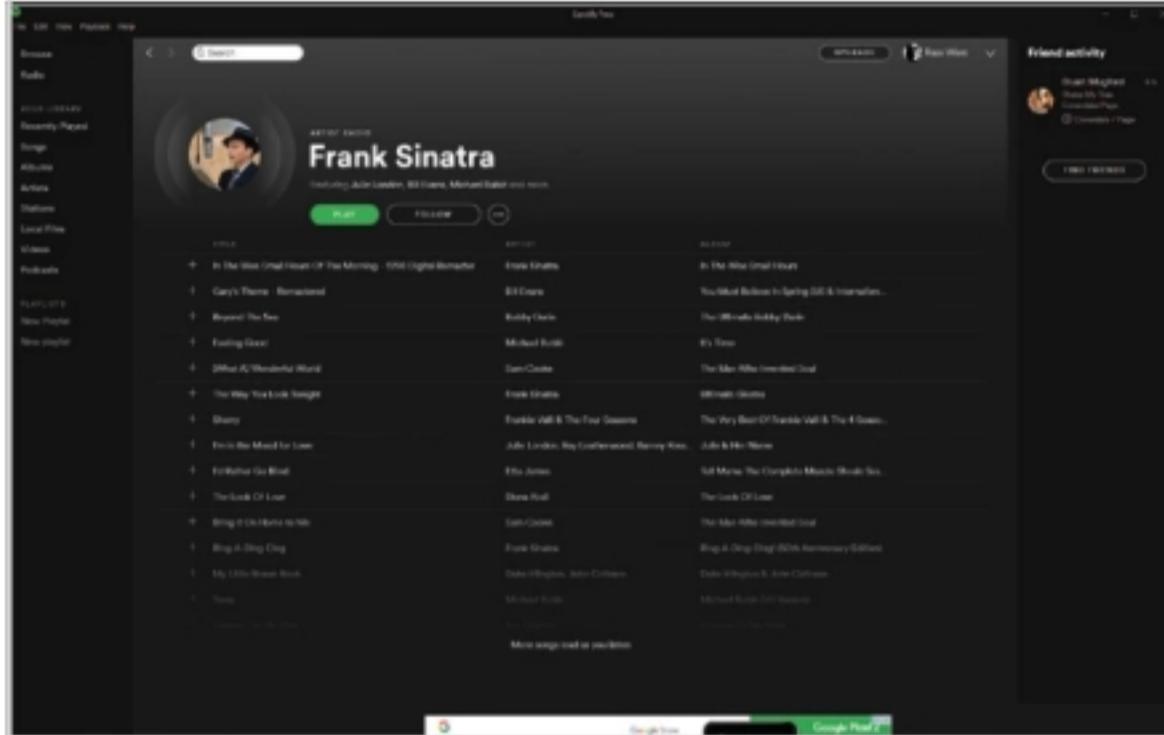

Step 6 Music you have downloaded or bought, and any music stored on your computer, will appear under the Your Library heading in the left sidebar. You can view all of this music by song, album, artist, recently played, etc. Clicking Local Files will display only those songs actually stored on your PC.
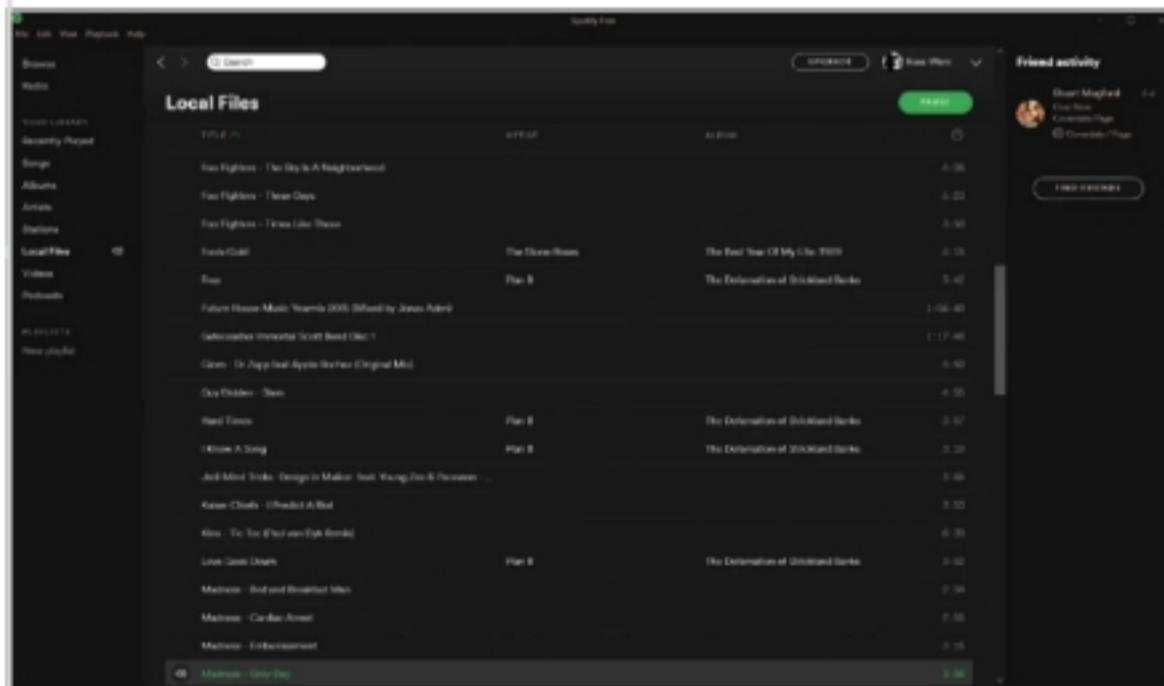
Step 7 To play any individual song in your library, simply find it in one of the lists, move the mouse pointer over the song title and click the Play button that appears. You can also select the song and then use the playback control panel at the bottom of the Spotify window (this is always displayed).
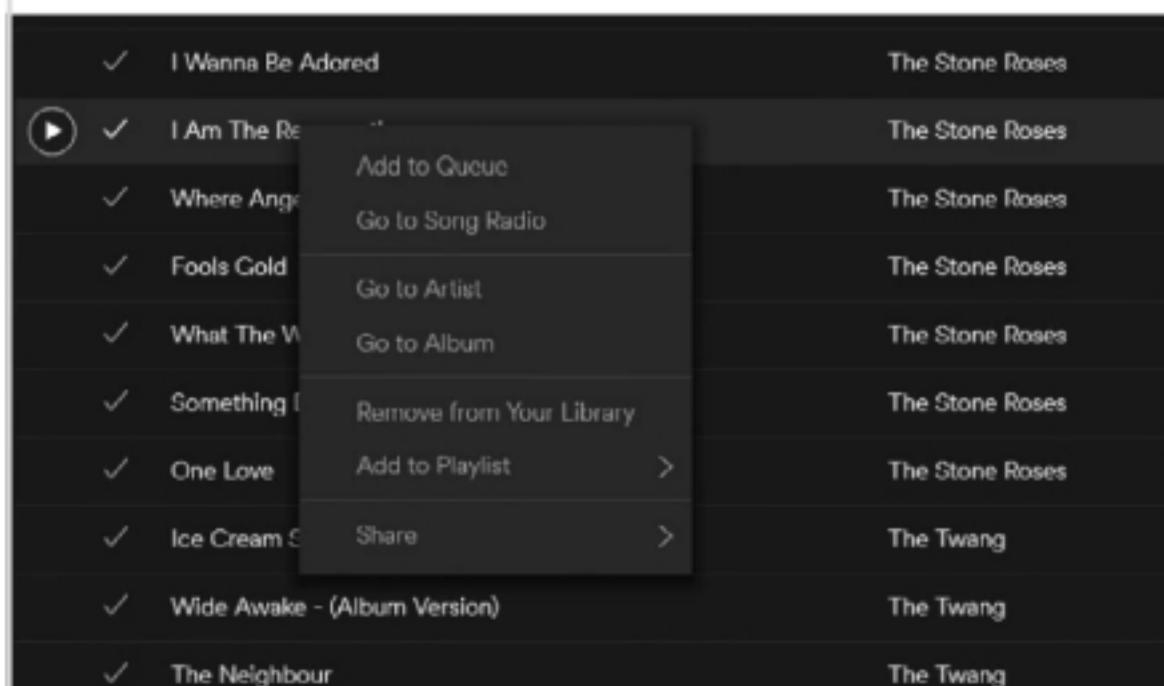
Step 8 If you are browsing albums, you can click the green Play button at the top of the list of tracks. This will begin playing all music in the album, or within the folder that is being viewed. Right-click on any song title and you will see more options, such as viewing other songs from that artist, or opening a radio.
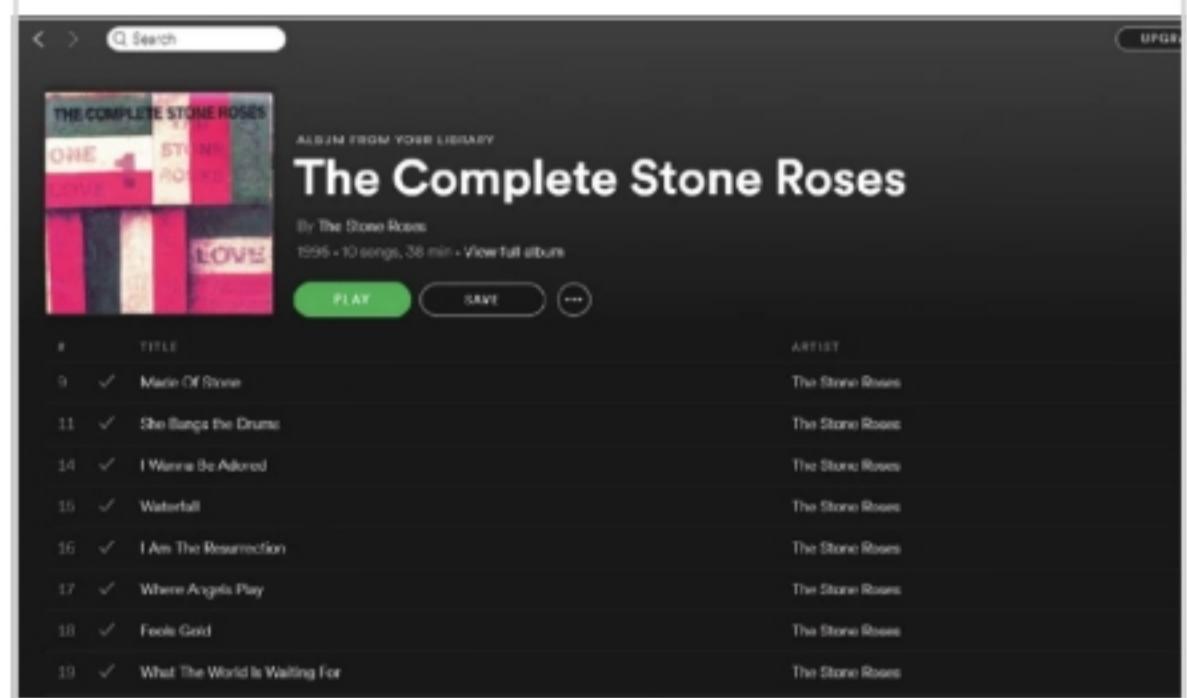

Step 9 You can create your own playlists in Spotify, containing any selection of songs you want. Click New Playlist in the menu on the left, give your playlist a name and click Create. It will then be displayed in your library and will also open within the main window, prompting you to add music.
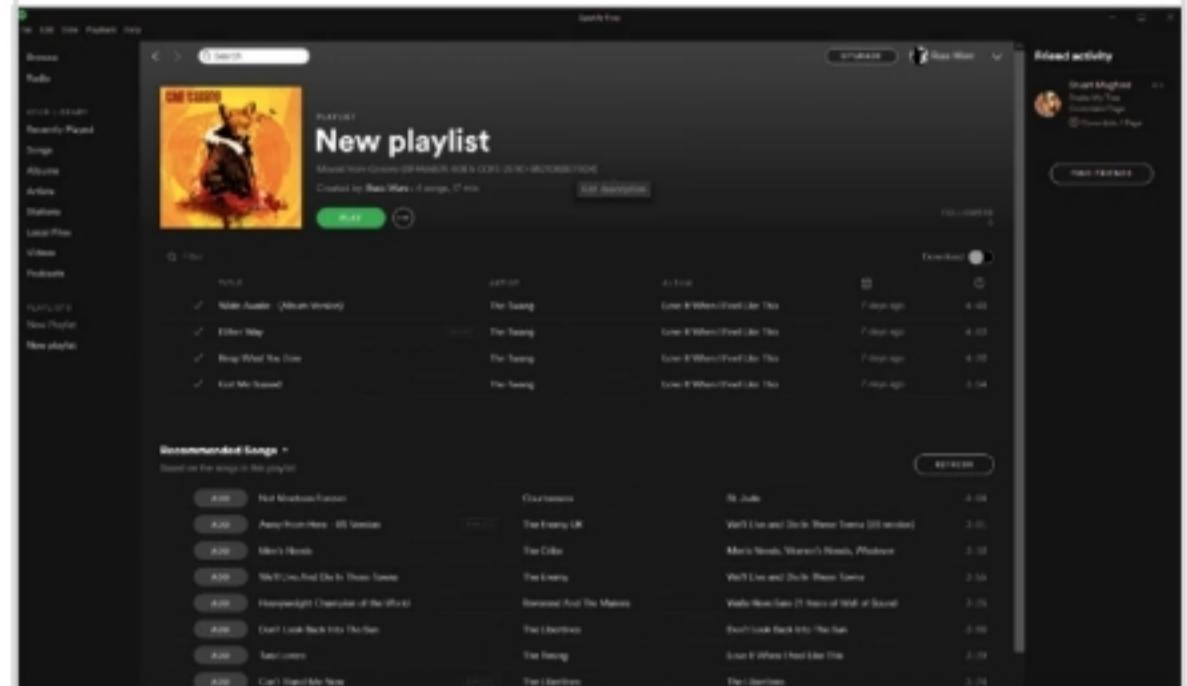
Step 10 To add songs to your playlists, find a song in your library and right-click on it. From the action menu that appears, click Add to Playlist and then select the playlist you want to add it to. If you have Spotify on your phone or tablet, your created playlists will show up there as well.
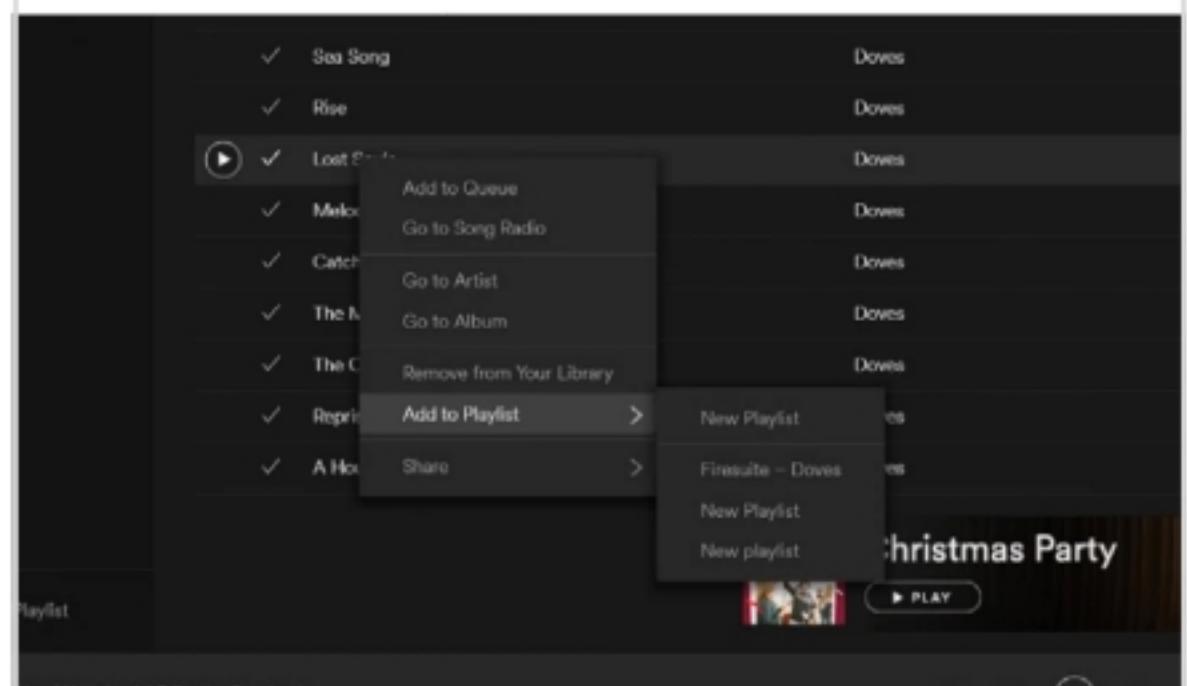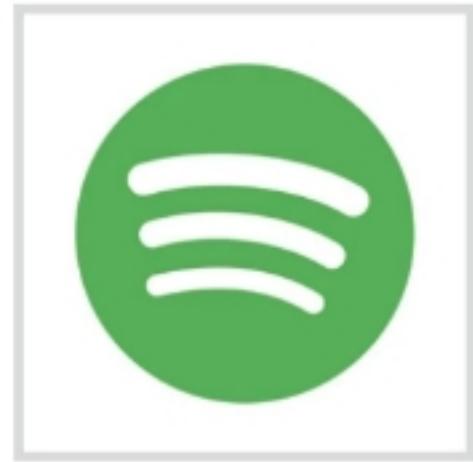
Listening to Music with the Spotify App

Recently, Microsoft announced that Groove music would be completely replaced by Spotify in Windows 10. Spotify is an extremely good music playback and discovery app, so this is definitely a good move. Let's take a look at using Spotify in Windows 10.

Exploring the Spotify App

The free version of Spotify offers a great selection of features and access to loads of music. However, if you want an ad-free experience, you will need to buy a premium account.

Step 1 You can download and install the Spotify app from the Windows store for free. It is also free to use, although some of the features will need a premium (paid) account. Once downloaded and installed, you can either create a Spotify account to sign in or you can sign in with Facebook.
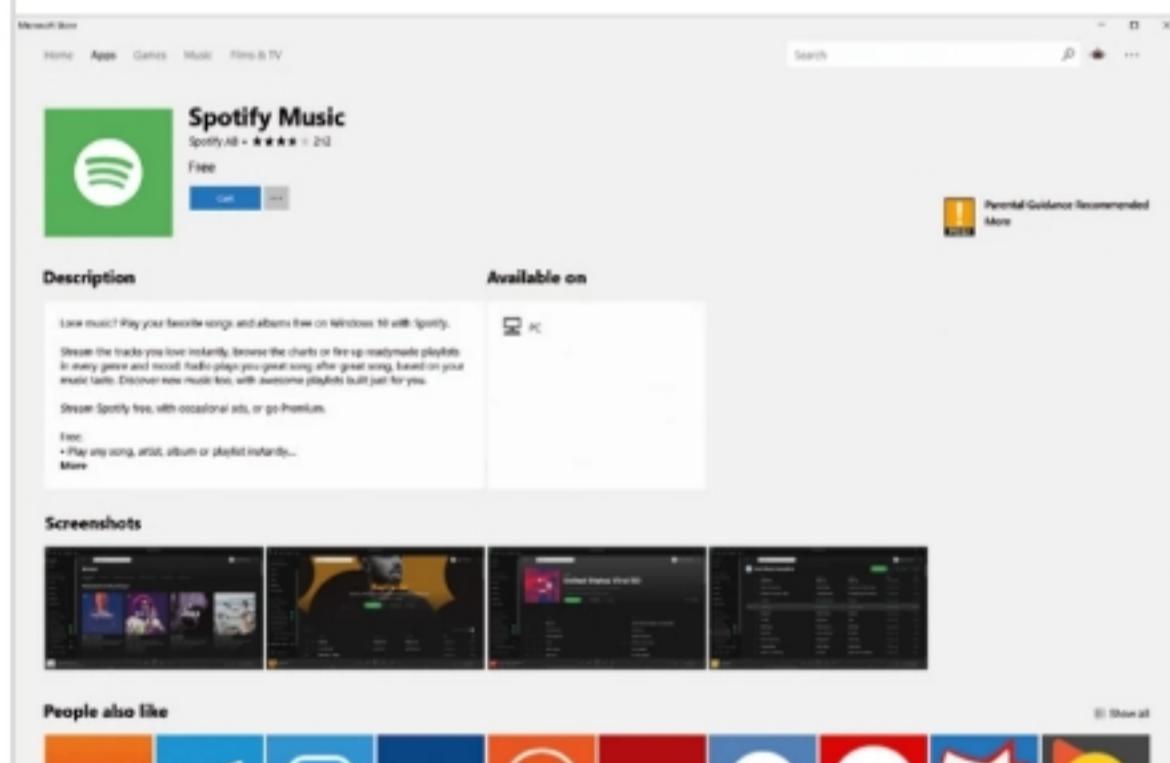
Step 2 If you have used Groove Music before, the layout and controls of Spotify should be fairly familiar. The main areas of the app (music store, radio, local files, etc.) are accessed by using the menu on the left-hand side of the main window. The playback controls are always along the bottom.
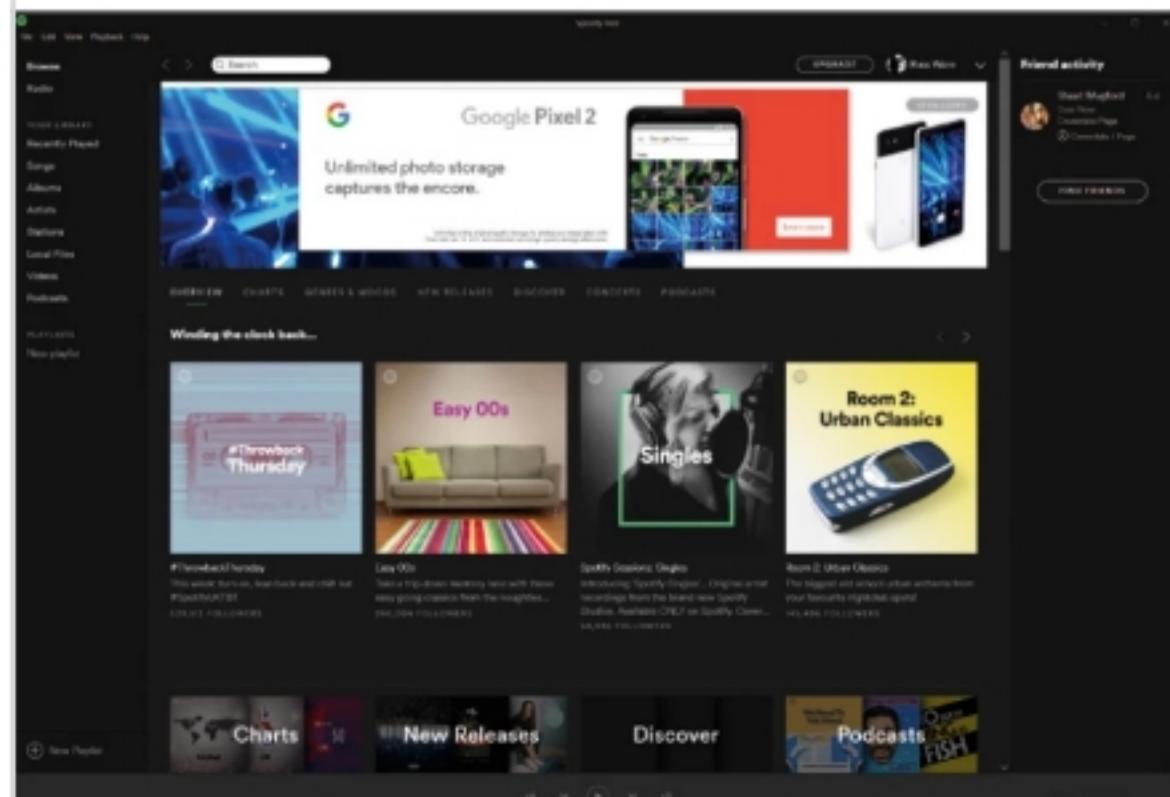

Step 3 When you first open the app, the browse screen will be displayed. Here you can see new releases, charts, albums, podcasts and other media to stream and buy. A premium account will allow you to listen to almost everything you see here, and elsewhere within Spotify.
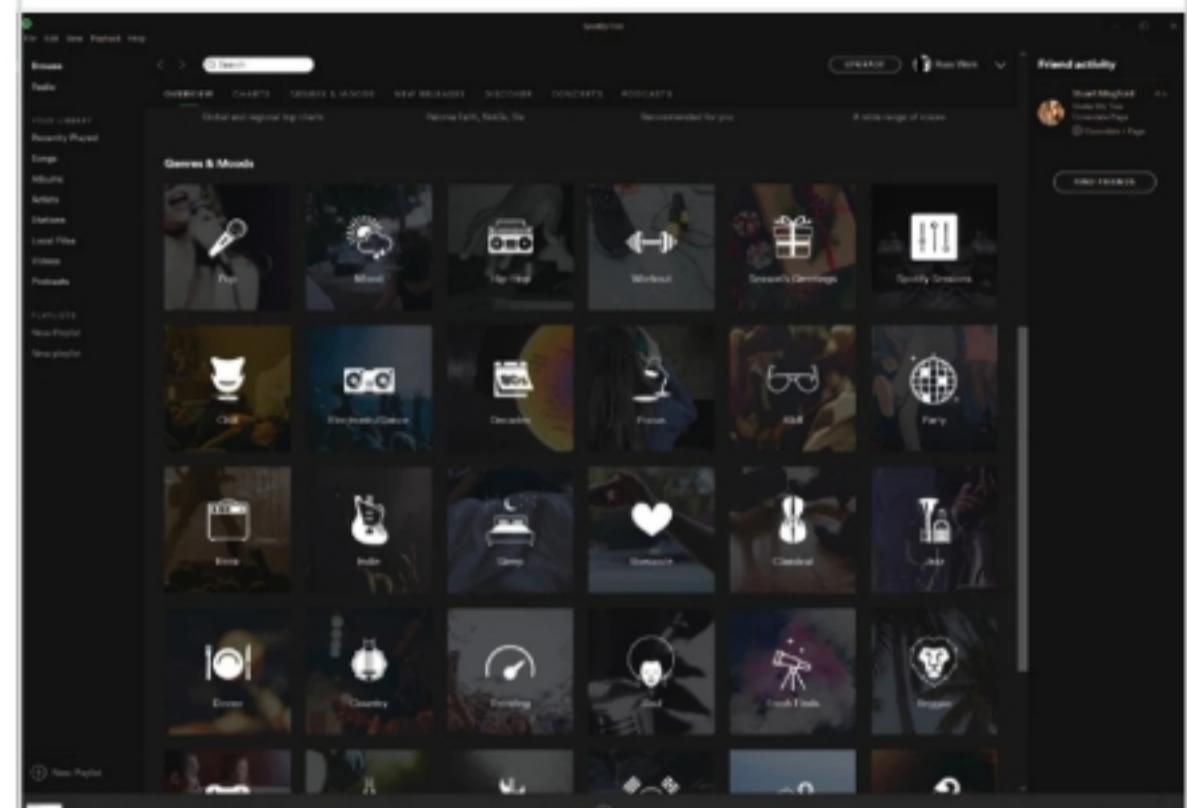

Step 4 Click the radio link in the left sidebar and you can see a selection of digital radio stations to listen to. These will be a random selection of music by different artists and different genres. Just roll your mouse over a radio station and click the Play button to start listening.
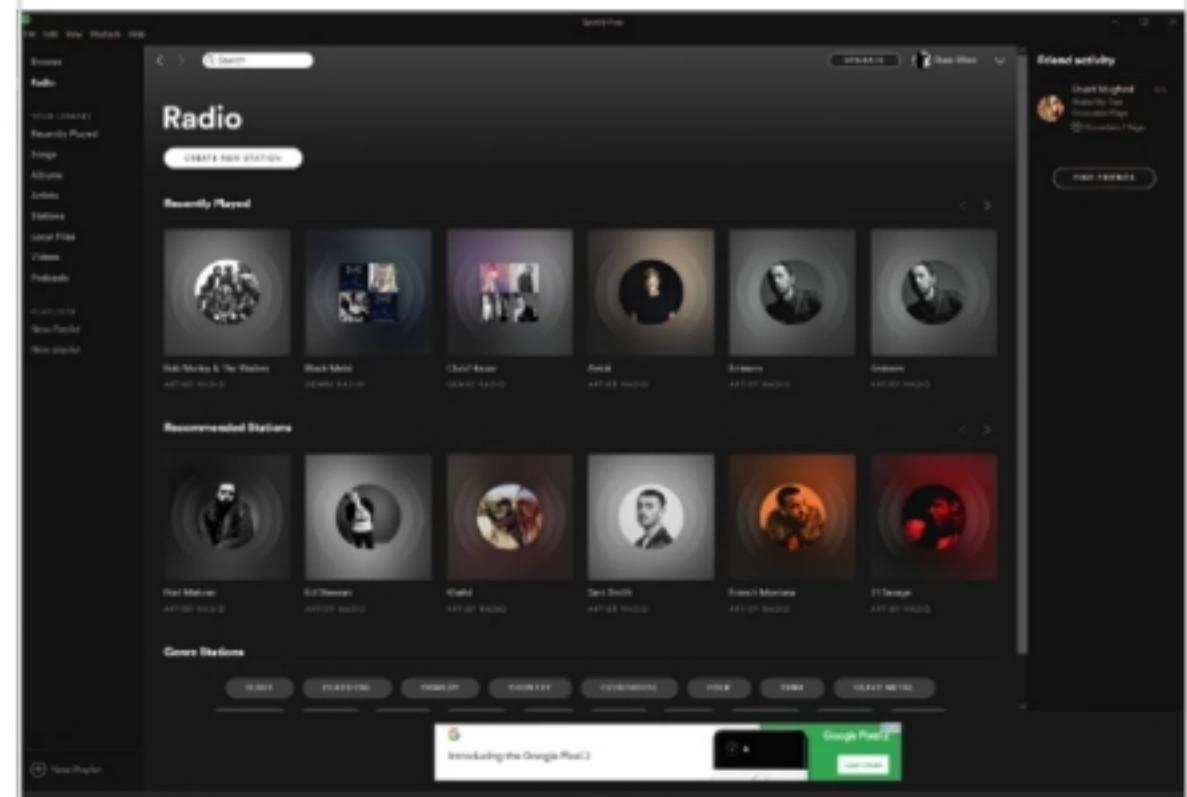
Step 3
If you need to straighten the image, you can do so using the handle to the right of the photo. Click on this and move your mouse up or down to carefully rotate the image in small amounts. As you do this, a grid appears to help you line up the photo. Click Finished when done.
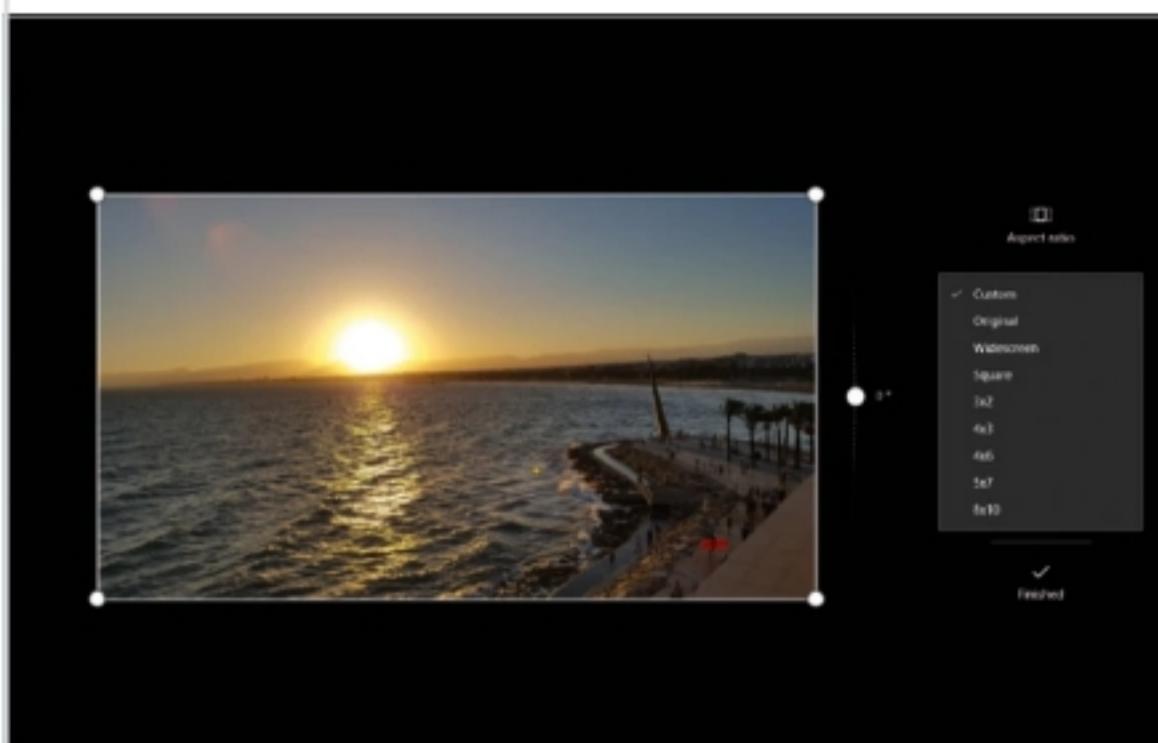

Step 4
Moving down the main edit toolbar you will see the Enhance button. You can click this to let the software make changes and improvements to the image automatically. You will see the image change slightly, and you can then use the slider on the button to increase or decrease those changes.
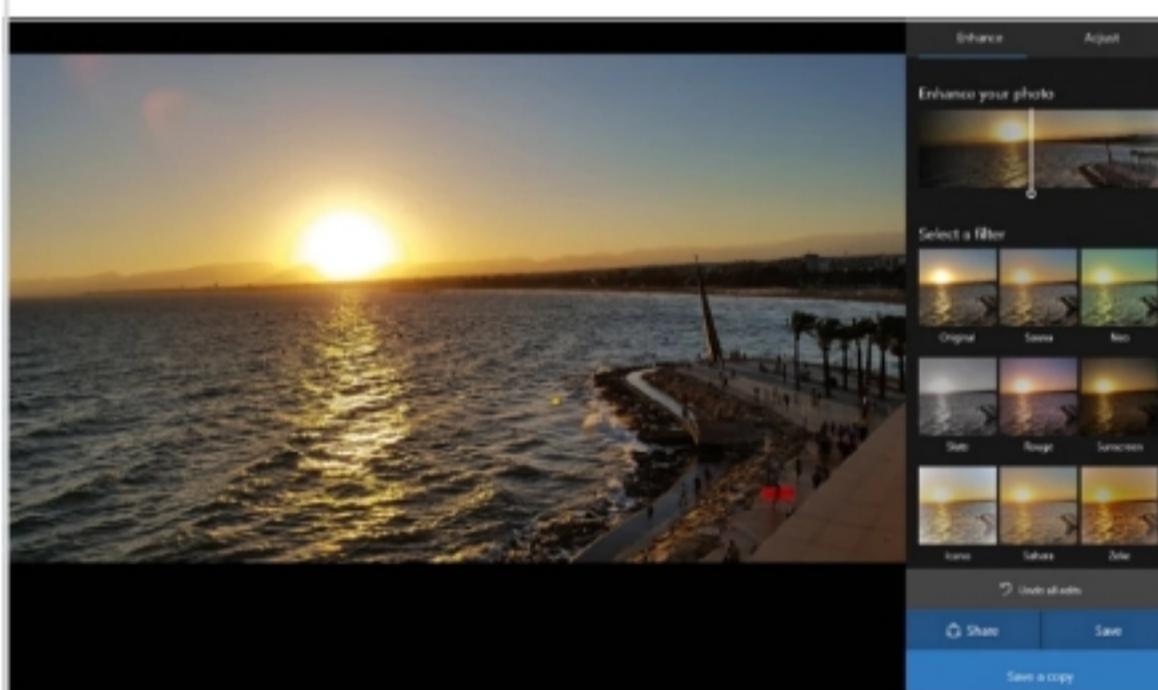
Step 5
You can, of course, apply enhancements yourself. Below the Auto-enhance button are the photo filters. Click on any of these to see the changes applied to your image. You can apply a filter and then adjust its effects by clicking on the Adjust tab at the top of the toolbar.
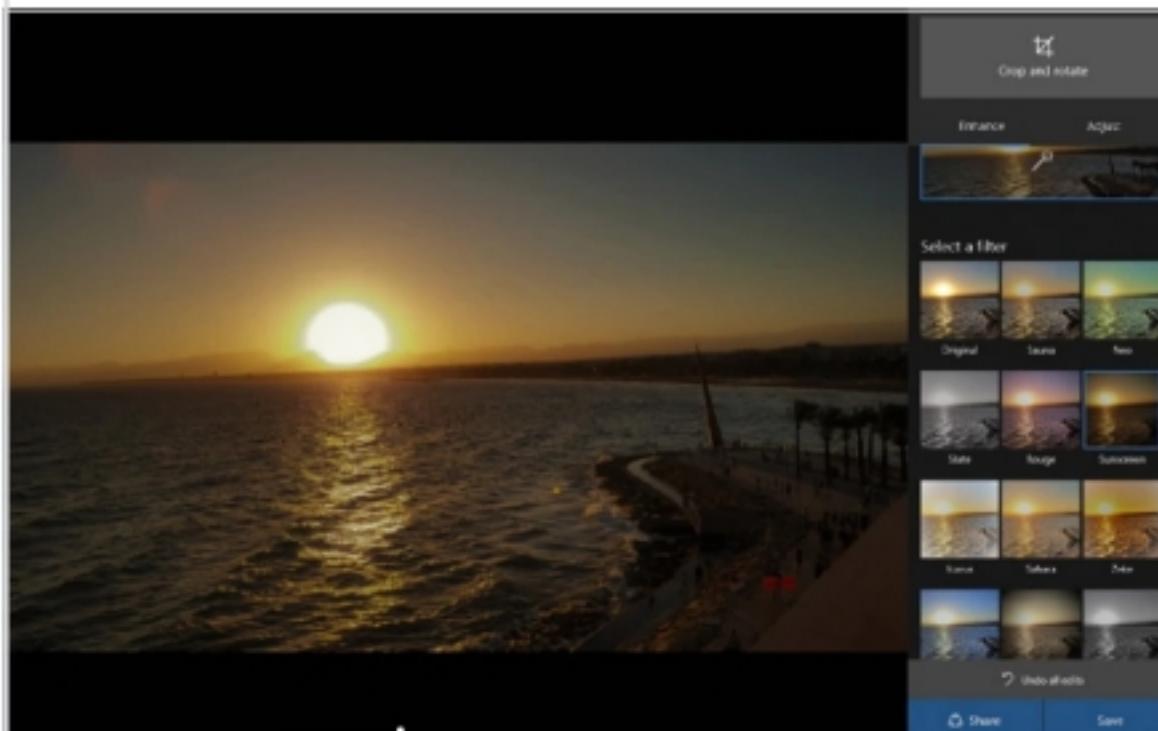
Step 6
The tools in the Adjust tab allow you to tweak the Light, Colour, Warmth and Clarity of an image. You can also use a slider to apply a Vignette (lighten or darken the edges of an image). Just use the sliders to adjust any of these effects until you are happy with your image.
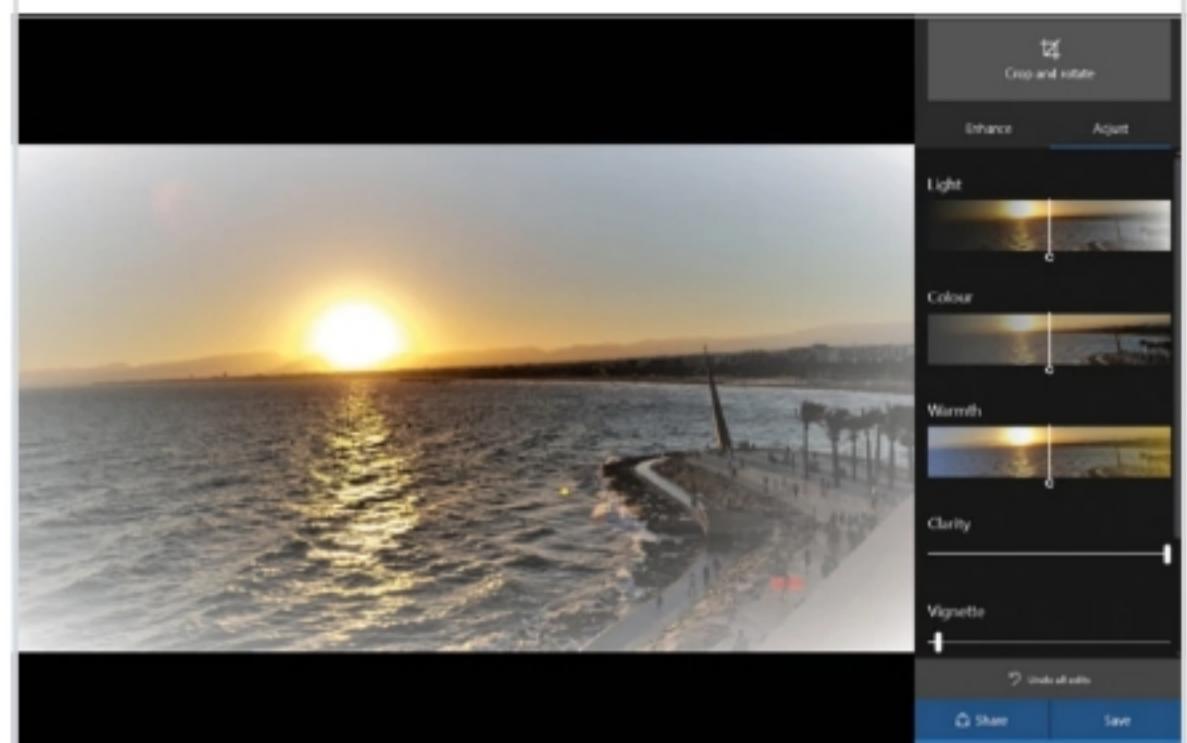

Step 7
At the bottom of the Adjust tab are Spot Fix and Red Eye tools. Click Spot Fix and the cursor will change to a blue circle. Place this over the part of the image you want to fix and click. The software will try to match the location of the spot to the scenery or colour around it, hopefully removing it.
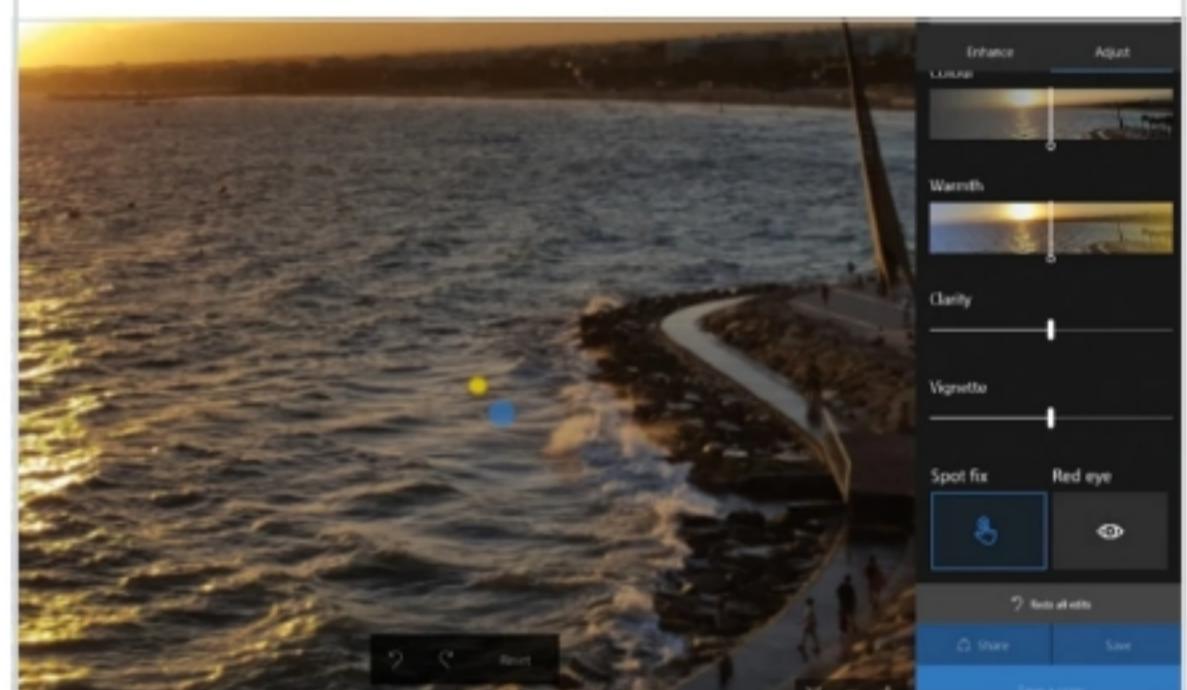
Step 8
The Red Eye tool works in a similar way. Click the tool and move the circle cursor over the red part of your subject's eye and zoom in if you need to. The tool will try to take the red out of the image and match it to the surrounding colour. The results are usually very good.
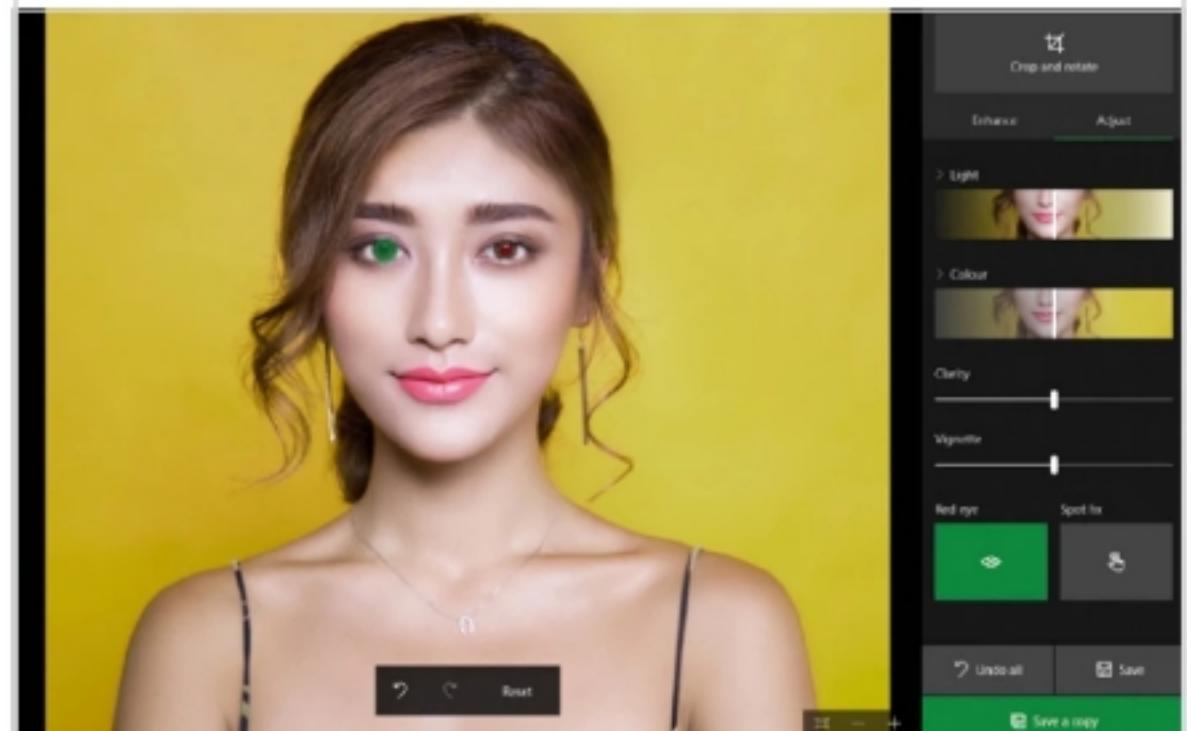
Drawing on Images

The Photos app in Windows 10 allows you to draw or write on top of your images, as long as you have installed the Anniversary update, and then save them as a completely new file.

Step 1   Open the Photos app and select your image (or double click an image to open it in Photos if that is the default app). Along the top of the image are several buttons, click the Draw button to begin editing your image. You will see a new set of buttons and controls appear at the top.


Step 3   The contextual menus allow you to change the colour and the thickness of the pen or pencil tools. When you have picked a style, colour and size, you can begin to draw or write over the top of your image. The drawing tool in Photos works best with a touchscreen PC, of course.

Step 2   From left to right, these buttons allow you to draw/write in pen style, pencil style, calligraphy style, erase, switch out of touch writing mode, save your file, share your file, and exit drawing mode. If you click on any button and see a small arrow, click again to open a contextual menu for it.
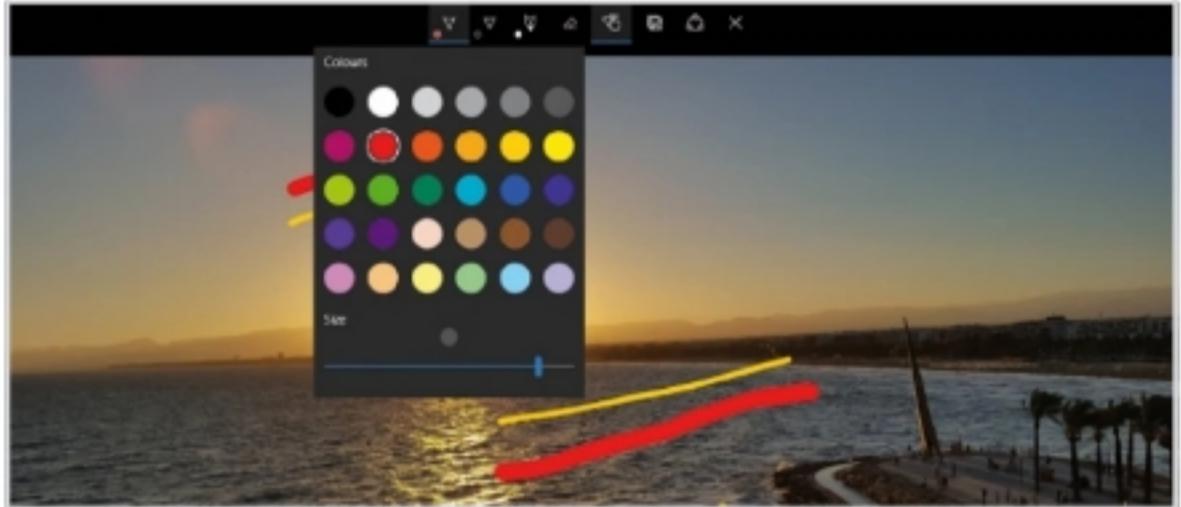

Step 4   Once you have completed drawing or writing on your image, you can save it. If you want to retain the original image, change the name of the edited image in the save dialogue box before you finish. If you click on Share, a list of sharing possibilities will appear to choose from.
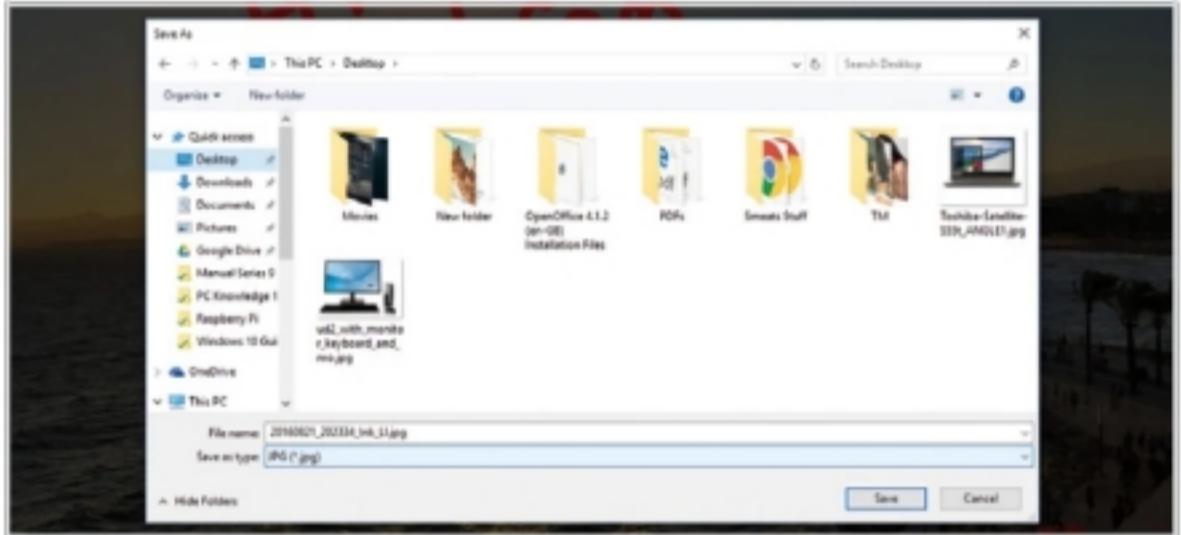

Editing Images

The image editing tools in the Photos app have been improved and added to in the Anniversary update, including the addition of preset filters and effects.

Step 1   Open your image in Photos and click on the Edit button at the top right of the screen. If you had the Photos app running in full screen, the image will be shrunk down slightly to fit the new toolbar, down the right of the of the editing window.
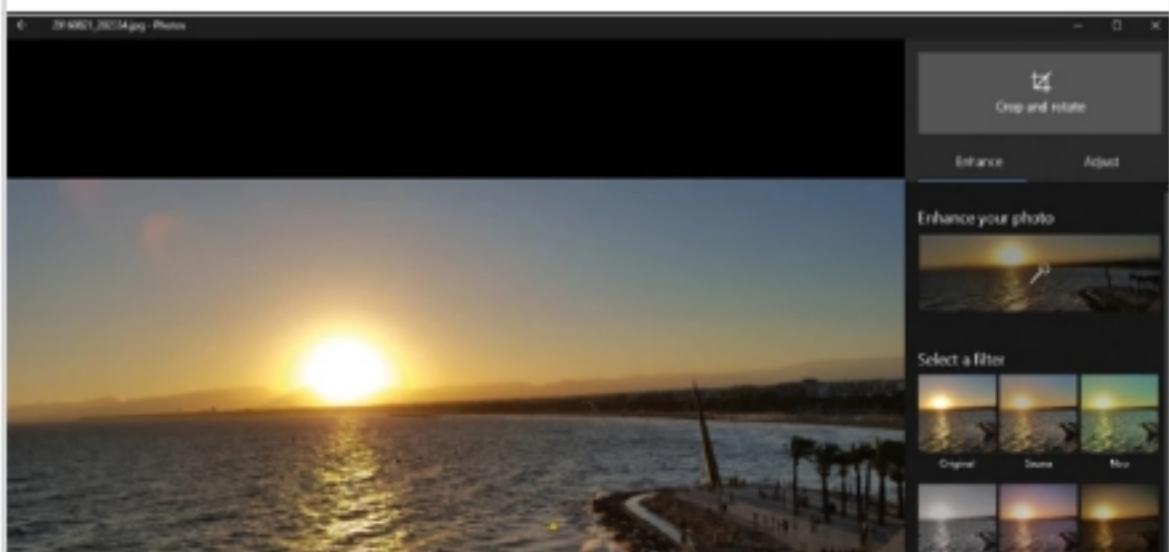

Step 2   Starting at the top of the editing toolbar, you have the Crop and Rotate button. Click this to see further options for managing the aspect of your image. You can choose a preset aspect ratio, or drag the handles at the corners to crop to a custom shape.
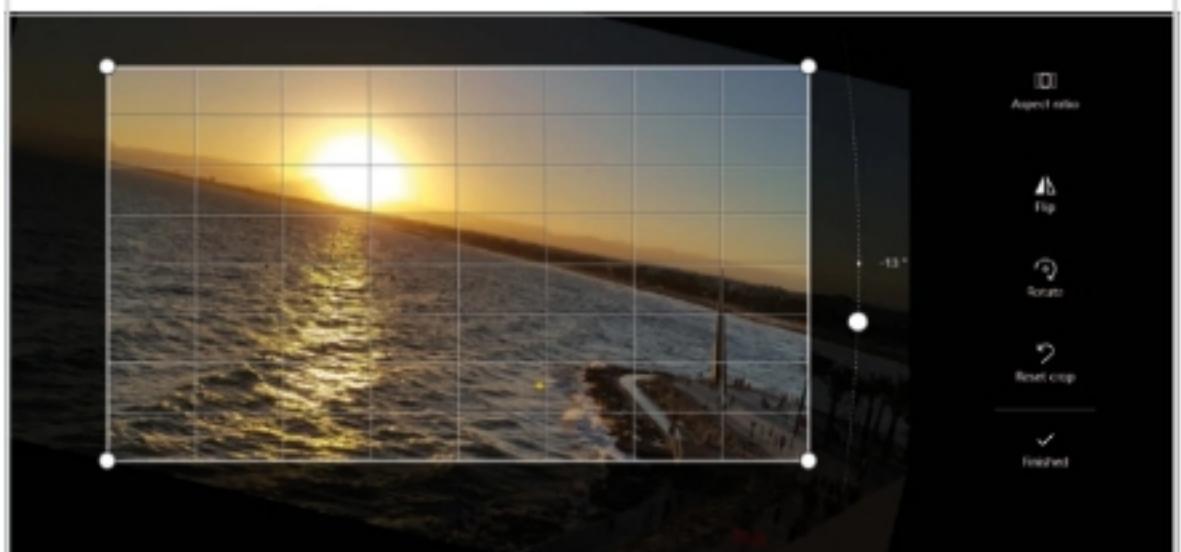
Step 5 You can also choose where Photos should look for images here. Your own Pictures folder, plus Windows' public Photos folder are automatically included; but it's really useful to be able to change this if you store your images somewhere else, perhaps an external hard drive you always use.
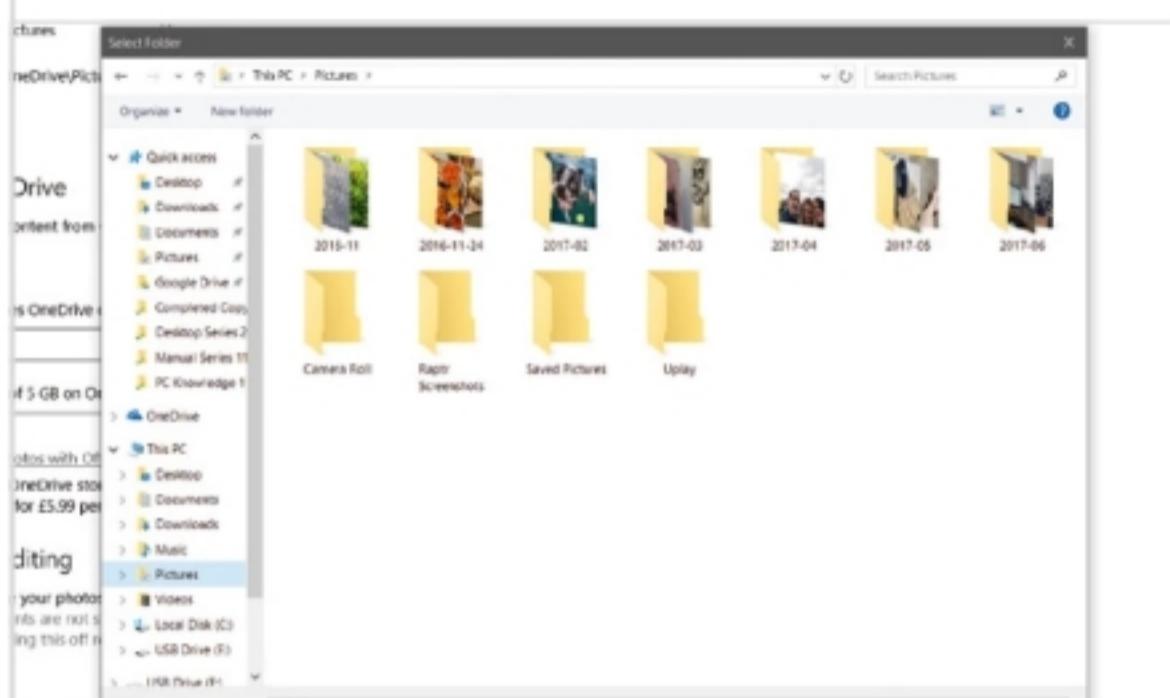

Step 6 Back to the Photos Collection. You're now going to use the Select feature, found in the menu at the top right. This enables you to select individual or multiple images. You'll see the top menu bar has now changed, while each image has a tick box appear on it. Click it to choose the images you want.
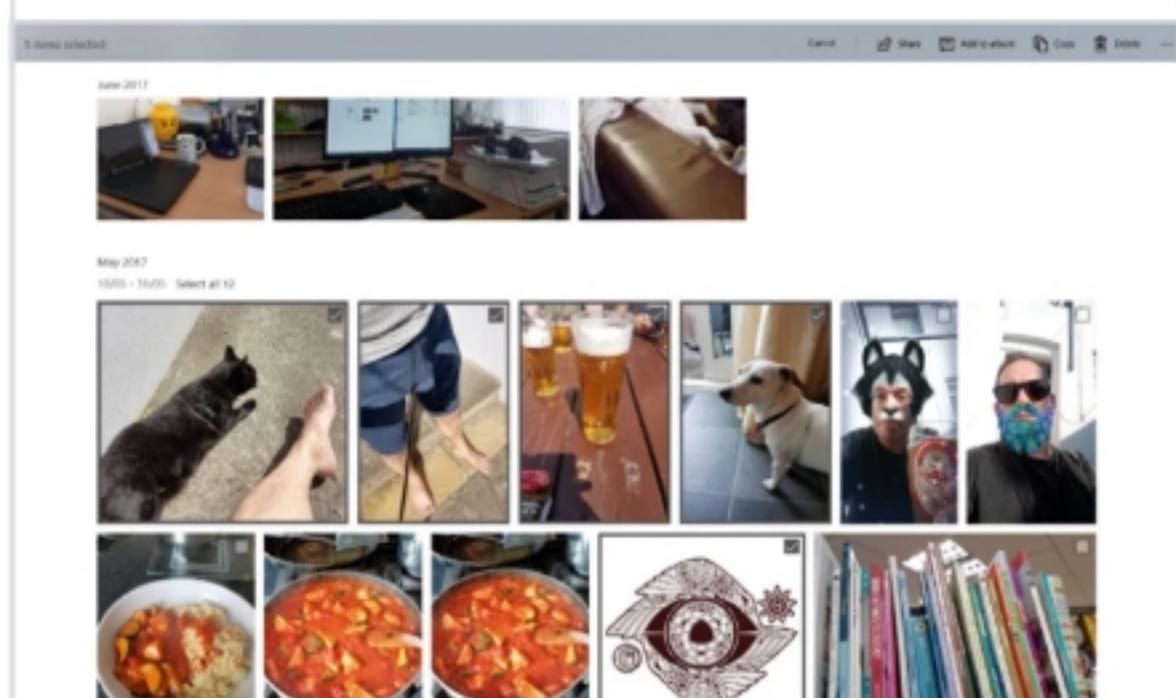
Step 7 The Photos app allows you to do several things with your photos and images. The first is to email them. Select the images you want to send and click the Share button in the toolbar. The share options window will open, allowing you to choose how to share the images, including Mail.
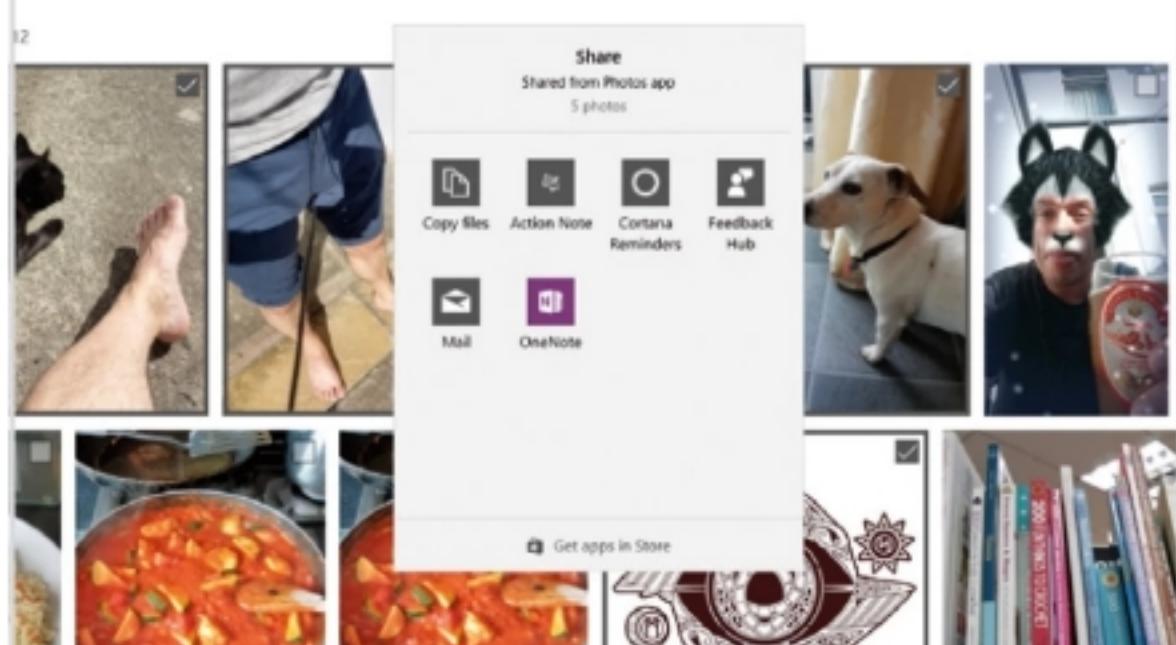
Step 8 You can also copy your photos and images into another app or File Explorer window. To do this, select the photos you want, then click the Copy button in the toolbar (the old Ctrl-C keyboard shortcut works too). You can then paste the photos wherever you want on your computer.
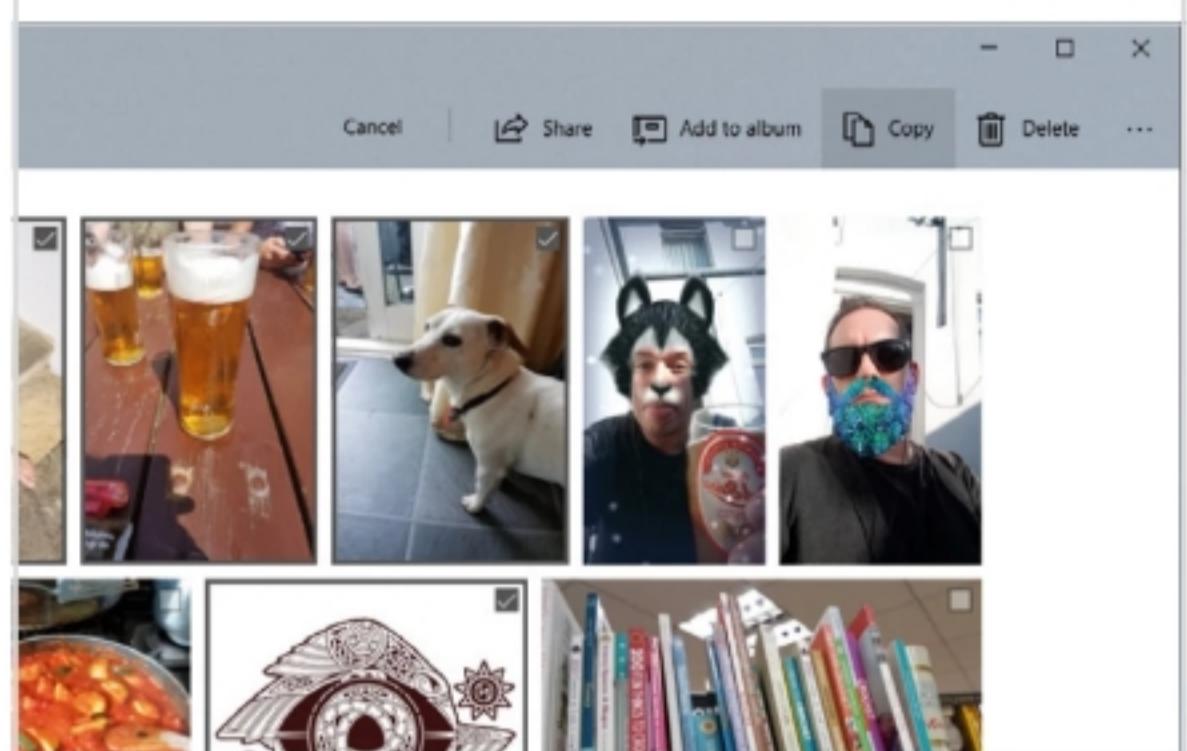

Step 9 To delete photos, select them as detailed previously and click the Delete button in the Toolbar. You will see a pop-up to confirm you want to continue with the action. Deleted photos are moved to the recycle bin anyway, so you have a chance to retrieve photos deleted in error.
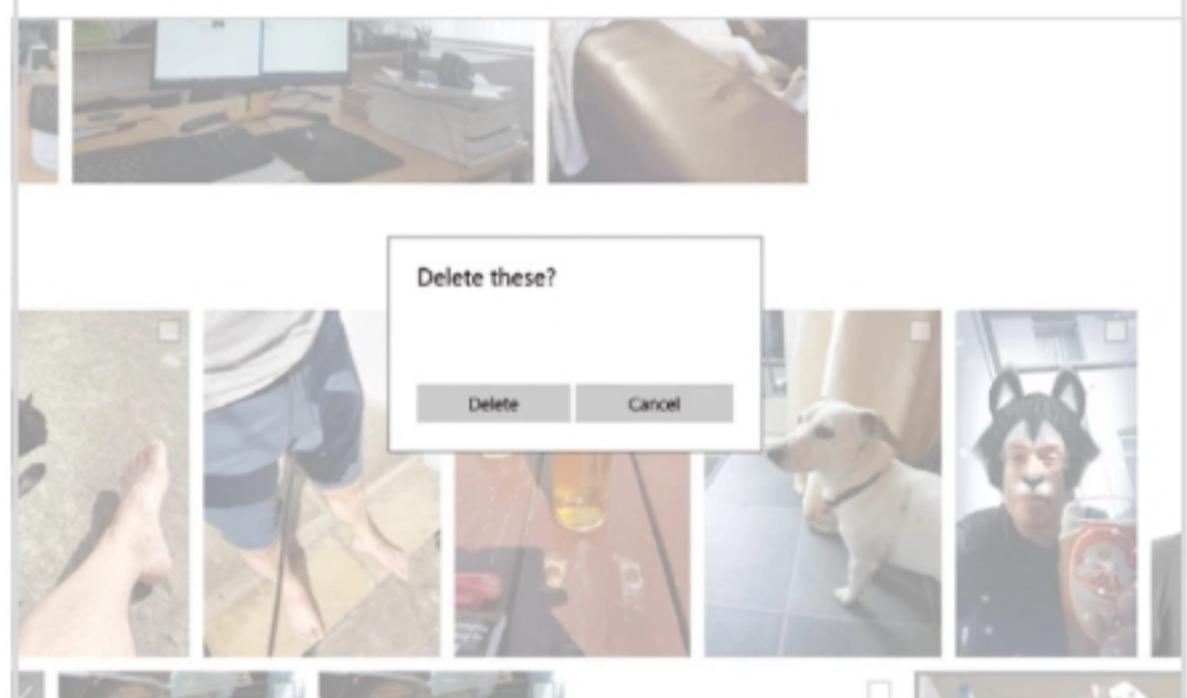

Step 10 The final tool in the Select toolbar is the Add to Album button. This adds any images you have selected to either one of the auto-created albums, or to an album you create for the purpose. Click 'Create new album' in the popup window, give it a name and then click 'Create album'.
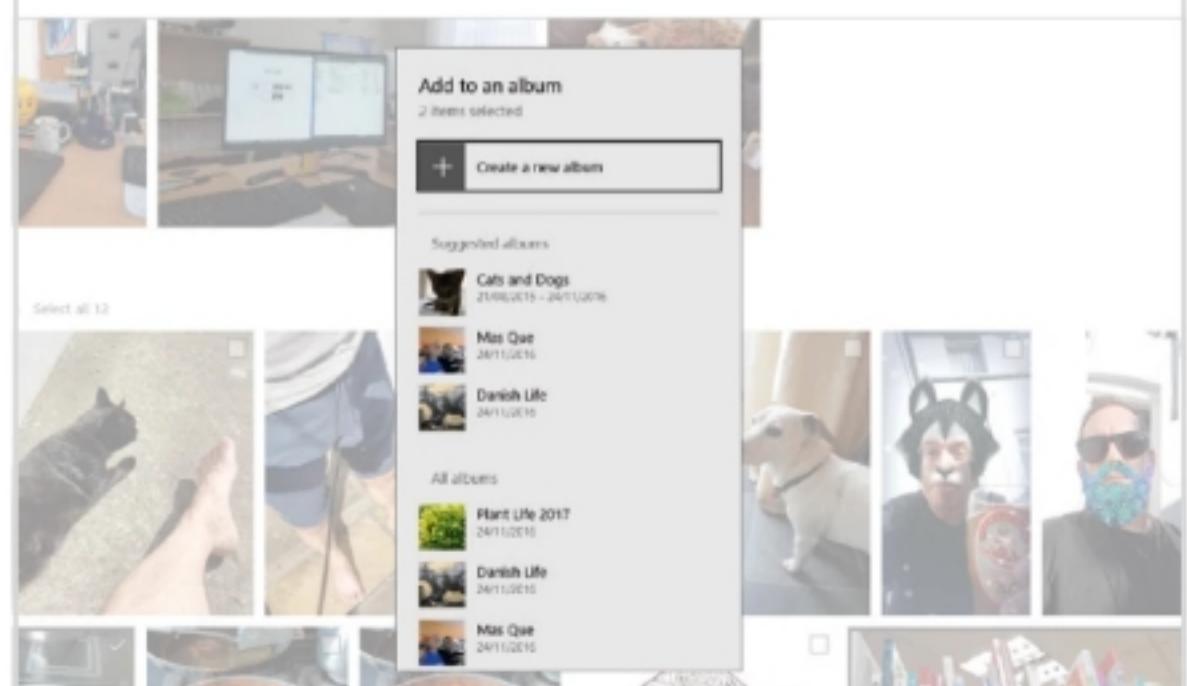
How to Manage and Edit Your Photos

The Photos app was first introduced in Windows 8 but it wasn't the best experience when compared to most third party apps. In Windows 10 it has been improved, with better ways to browse photos and a lot more editing options to make the most of your images.

Managing Your Images

The Photos app has seen some useful improvements over the last few years and is actually very powerful now. It doesn't offer the flexibility of an app like Photoshop Elements, but it does a lot of simple edits very well.

Step 1 Photos shows all of your images in a scrolling timeline of images, like we're now used to seeing on many smartphones or tablets. This is called your photos Collection. You can click on any image to get a full-window view and then click the Back arrow in the top left corner to return to the main list.
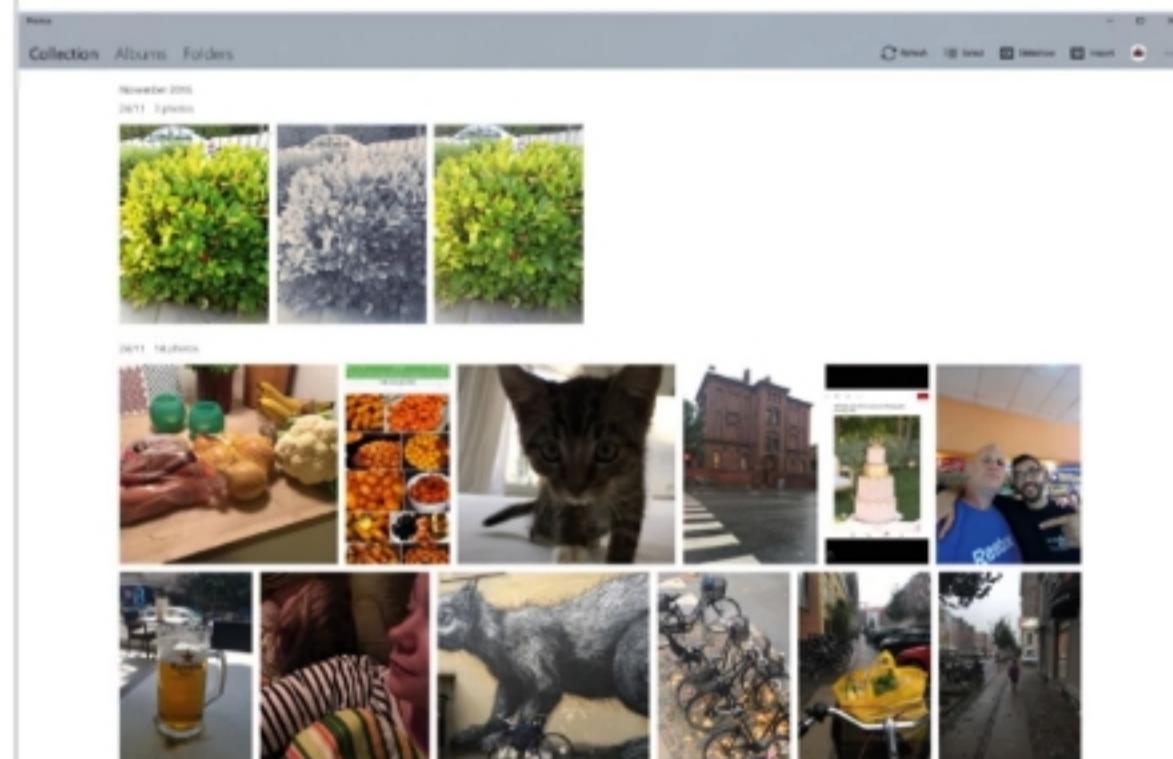
Step 2 Albums is a completely automated feature. If you have an iPhone or iPad, you may have seen Apple's Moments feature; this works in much the same way. Albums gathers together groups of photos you took around the same time, so you can easily look back through them later.
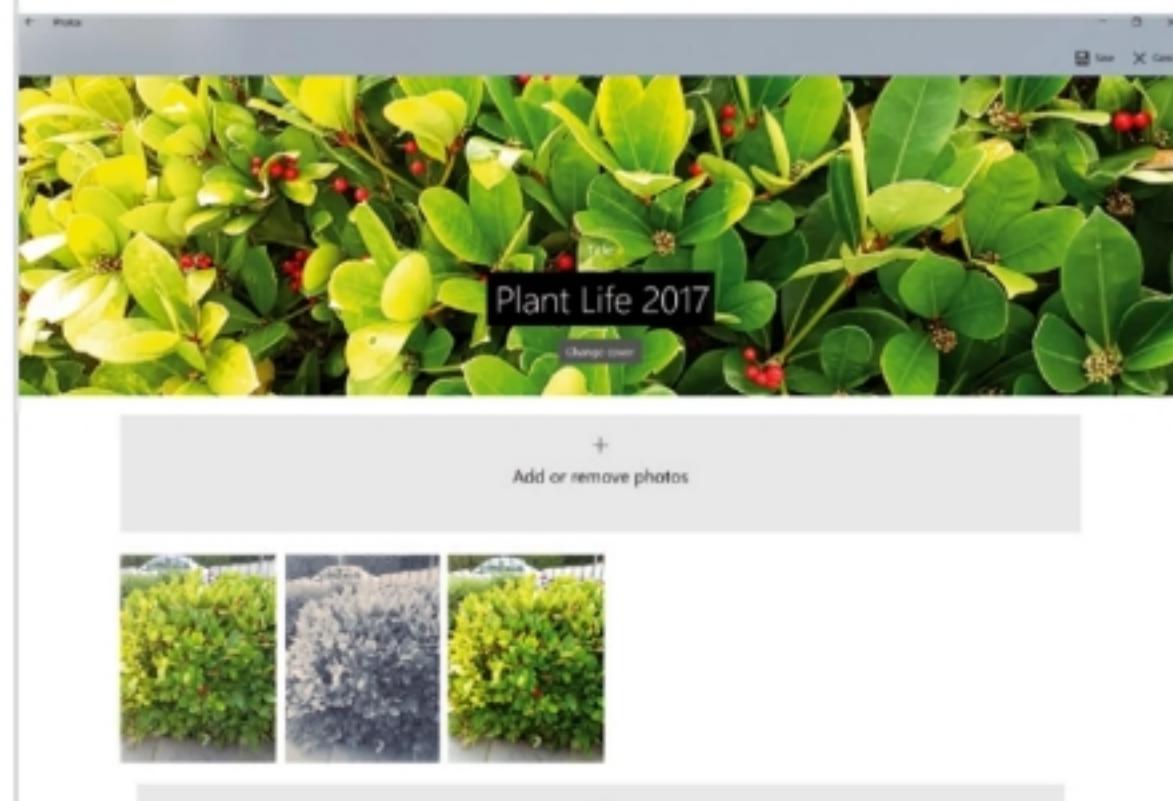

Step 3 If you're signed into Windows 10 with your Microsoft account, you'll also be signed in automatically to the Photos app. The benefit of this is that photos stored on OneDrive also appear in Photos. You can auto-upload photos from the OneDrive app for your phone as you take them.
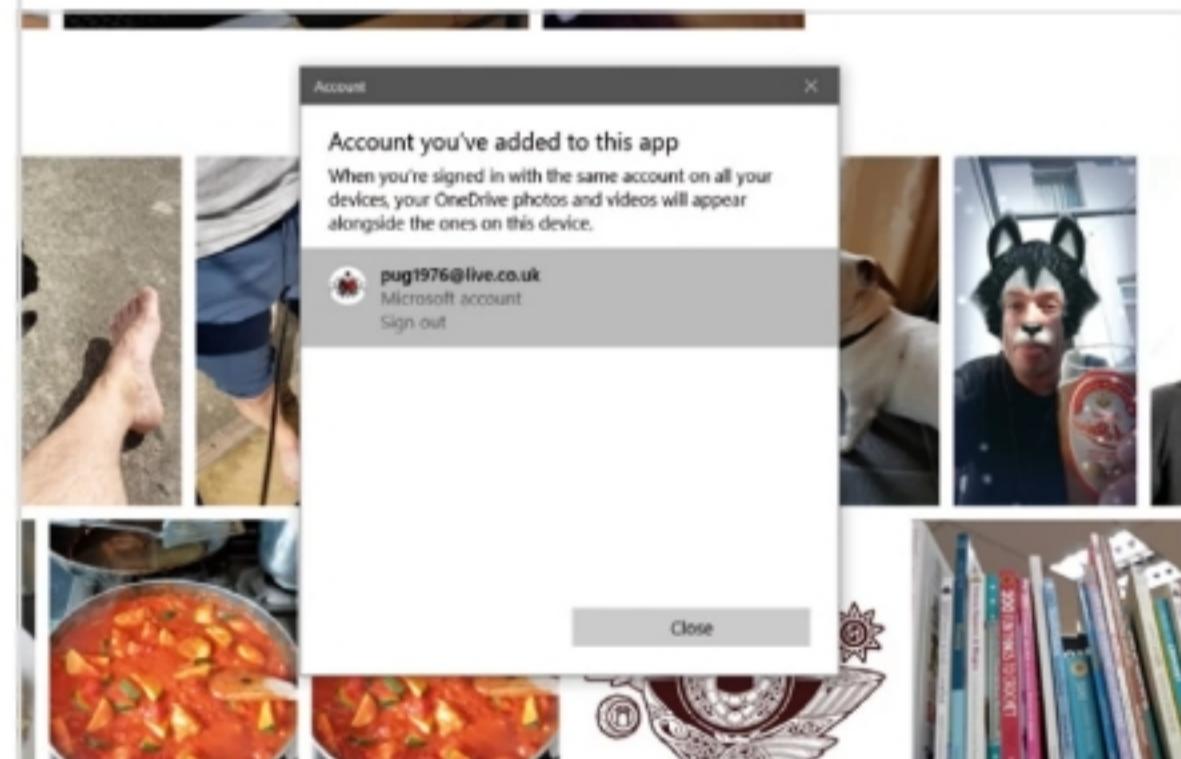
Step 4 Photos settings, click the More button at the top right, lets you choose whether the Photos app automatically enhances badly exposed photos as well as whether you want the app to show duplicate images as one file; say you saved a photo twice or imported it twice without realising.
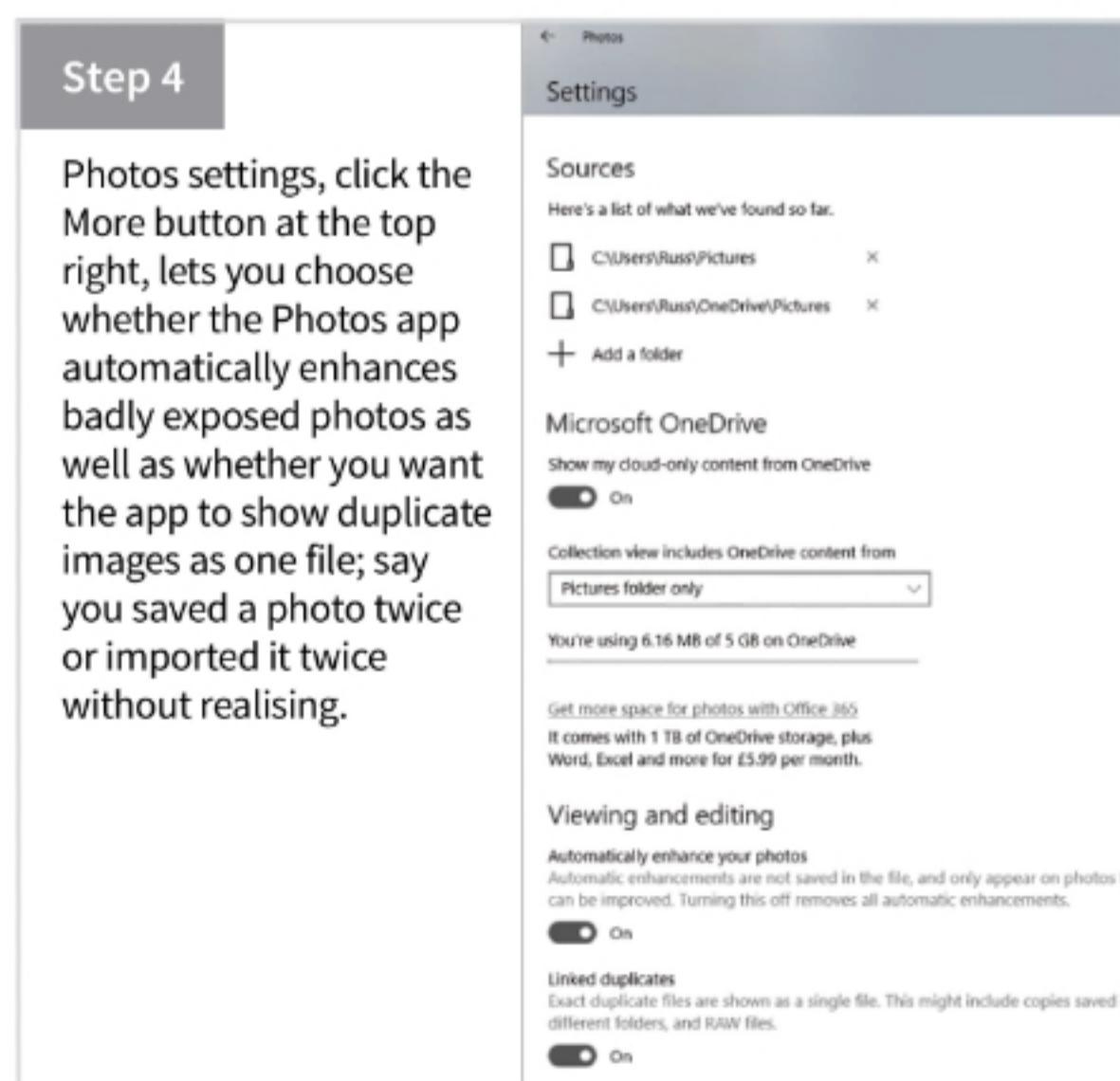
Importing to the Photos App

The Windows 10 Photos app is a great tool for importing photos from a phone, tablet or camera. It allows you to preview and individually pick images more easily, and even sorts them.

Step 1 Open the Photos app on your Windows 10 PC. Now connect your phone or camera to your computer using the relevant USB cable. If you see the pop-up menu asking how you want to deal with the storage media you just connected, ignore it or click it closed.

Step 2 The Photos app should have opened up with the Collections screen showing. If not, click the tab at the top to open it now. Along the top of the Collections tab are your controls: Refresh, Select, Slideshow and Import. Import is the only one you need to click at this point.

Step 3 The Photos app will now search for photos available to be imported. If your device is not connected properly, or the correct USB drivers are not installed, it will fail to find anything at this point. If you are transferring from a phone or tablet, you may also have to unlock the screen to continue.

Step 4 By default, every image detected on your device will be selected for importing. If you want to import everything, click Continue. If not, you can use the check boxes on the images to select those you want to import; use the Clear All and Select All buttons as required.

Step 5 You can now choose where the imported photos will be saved. By default, this will probably be somewhere like C:\Users\YourName\Pictures. Click the 'Change where they're imported' link to do just that. You can also choose to import into folders arranged by month or day.

Step 6 Click Import. Your image will now begin to appear in the Photos app window, within the Collections section. An album will also be created called Last Import. Click on one of the images shown to begin editing or enhancing it with the tools Photos offers.
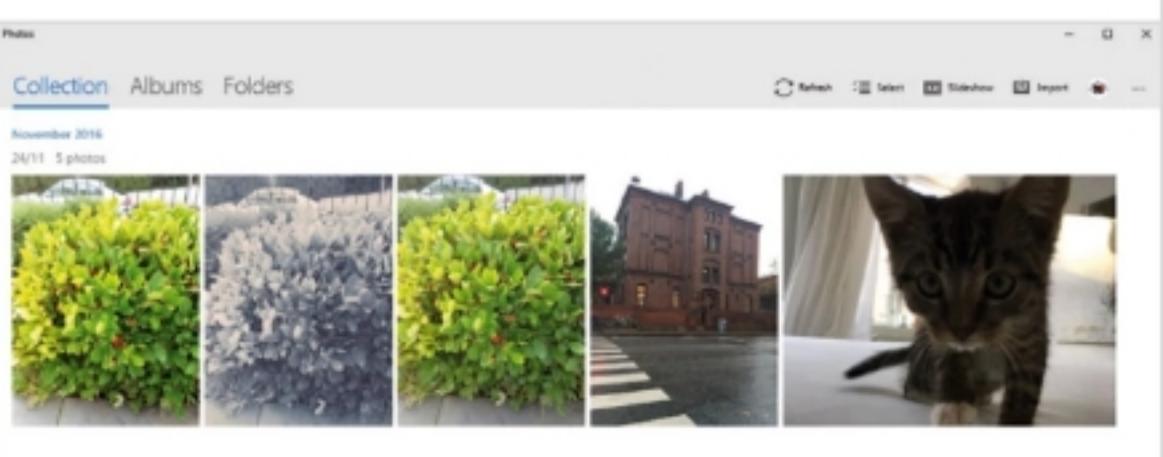
Learn How to Import Photos in Windows 10

Importing photos from a digital camera or phone on to your PC may seem like a simple task to some but if you have never done it before you can encounter problems and have no idea how to fix them. Let's take a look at importing photos from phone, tablet or camera.

Importing to a Folder

Importing your photos or images directly to a folder on the desktop, or elsewhere, is the traditional method. It tends to be quicker but offers fewer importing options.

Step 1 The first thing you need to do to import photos directly from a phone or camera is to connect the relevant cable to your PC. In almost all cases, this will be a USB cable of some sort. You will have been supplied a transfer cable with the device you are using. Plug this into a free USB port.


Step 3 Normally, when you first plug a device in to your computer which contains storage of some sort, Windows will ask how you want to handle the files in that storage. Scroll down the list to see 'Open in a Folder'. In some cases, Explorer will open showing the connected device.
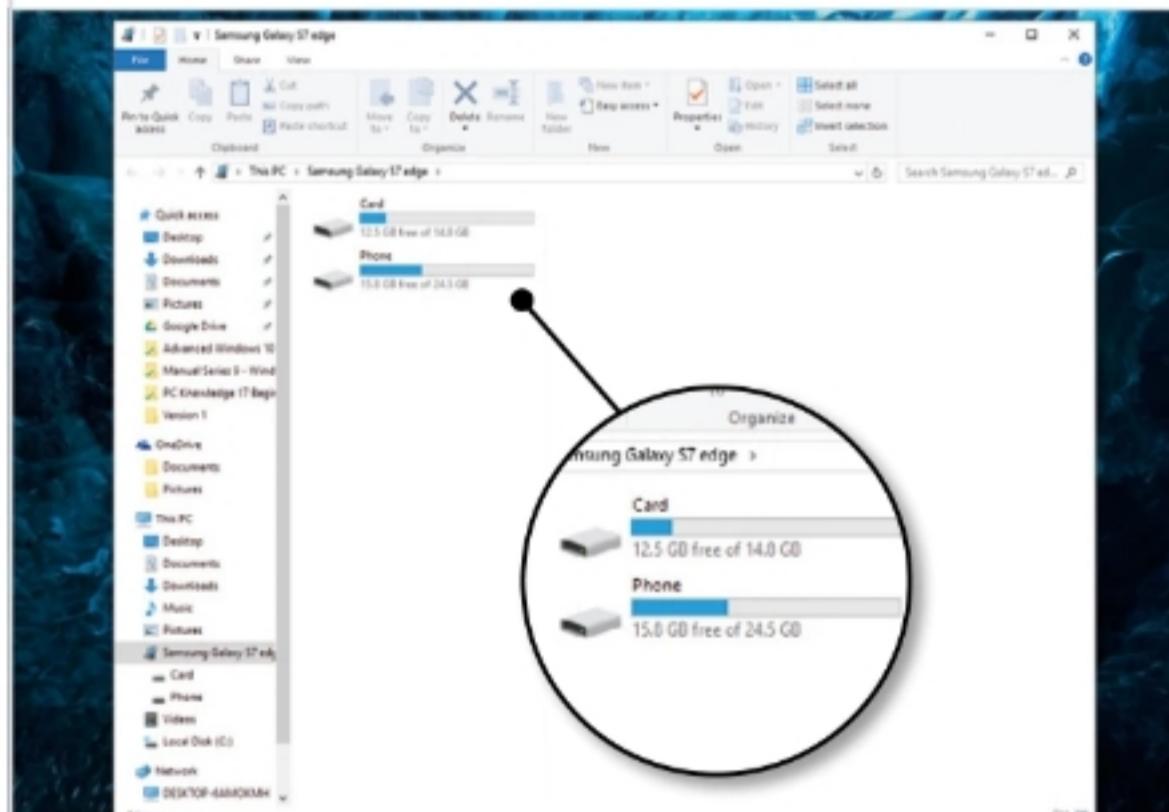
Step 2 Plug the other end in to your phone or digital camera and wait a few moments. Your PC should detect the device and may need to install some drivers to make the USB connection work.
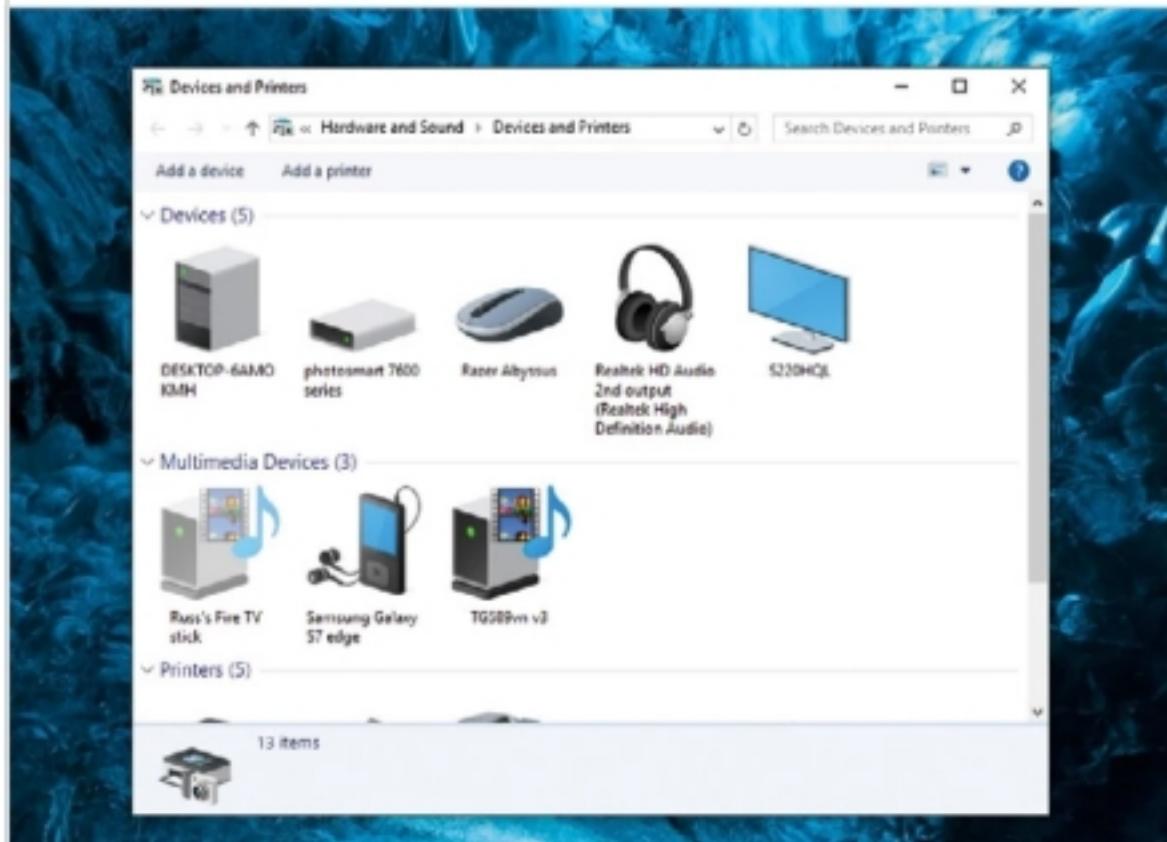
Step 4 Now click on the device storage: this may be Phone and Card on a smartphone and navigate to where the photos are stored. This will normally be in a folder called DCIM on your phone or camera. You can now simply cut and paste or drag and drop images to a new folder on your PC.
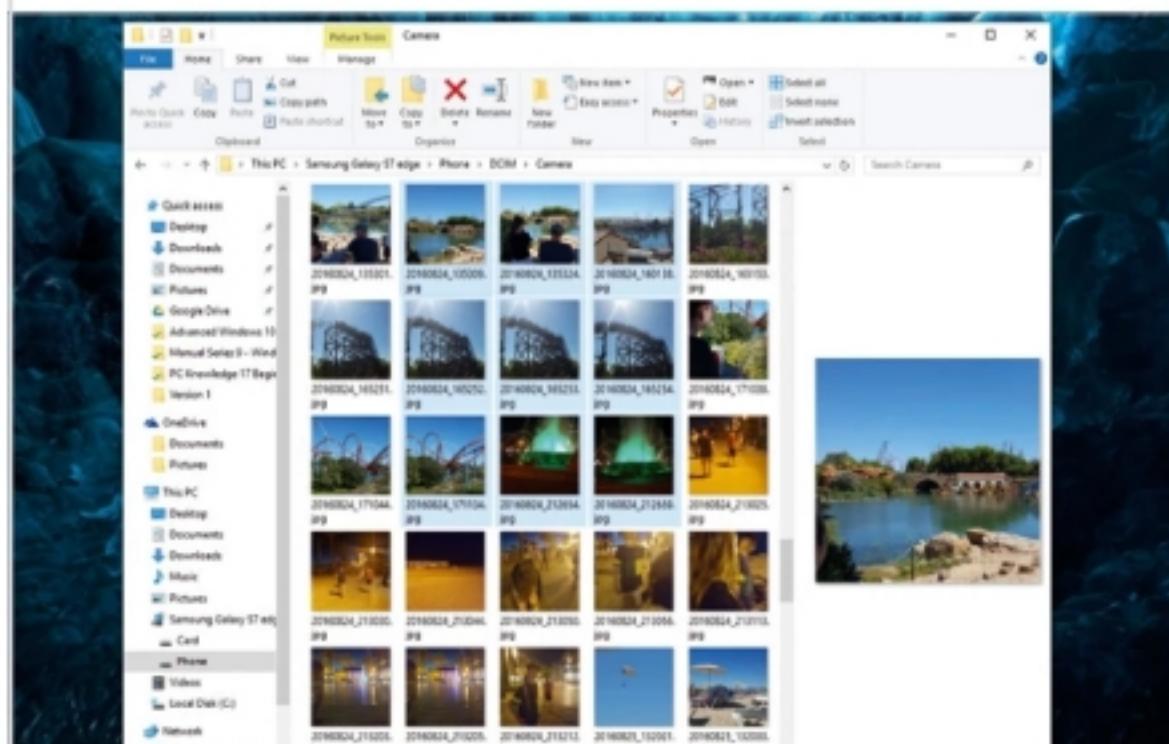
Calendar Pane

The main Calendar pane, however you choose to view it with the View buttons, contains several different bits of useful information. Public and national holidays are automatically added, based on location. The current day is accentuated in your chosen highlight colour. Weather and temperature information is shown for the current day, along with a few days after. Clicking the weather symbol opens the Weather app.

CALENDAR POPUP

You can now add a new event from the calendar popup in the taskbar, without having the main Calendar app open. Simply click on the date in the taskbar, select the date you want to add the event/reminder, and then begin typing in the text box below the date grid.
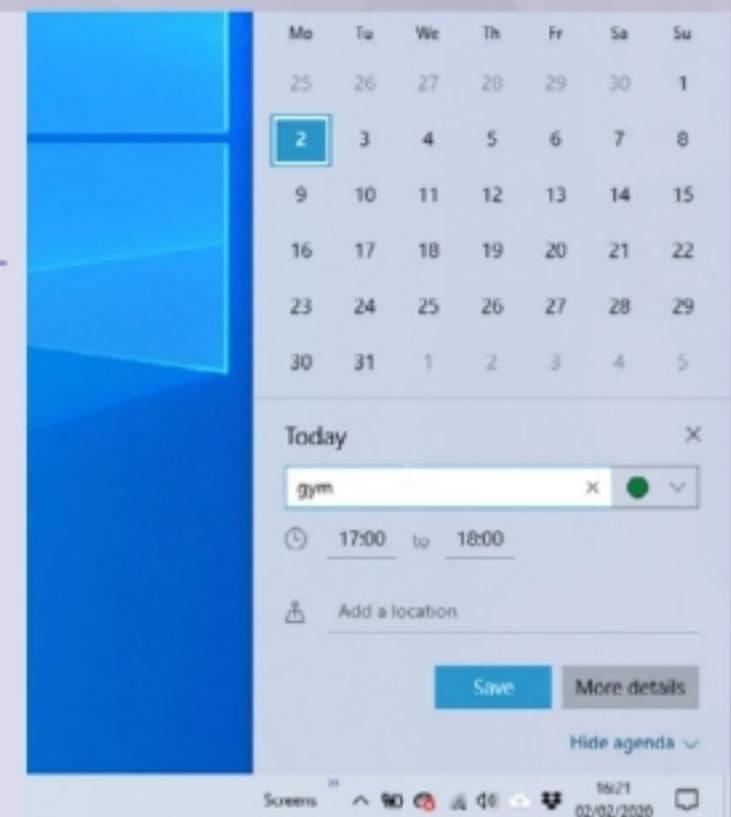
Add Event

Click on any day in the main pane, or any hourly slot in day view, and a mini Add Event pane opens. You can use this to add an event to your calendar quickly. The pane includes event name, time-slots and location; it also lets you choose into which custom calendar you want to add it. If you choose to add more details, click the More Details button, if not, click Done to add the event.

Calendar Settings

Alongside various customisation settings, such as the ability to choose light and dark themes and change the default highlight colour, are settings for adding new email accounts and changing the default view. You can also add public or national holidays manually, in Calendar Settings, if they have not been correctly added automatically.

Switch to Tabs

The Mail and Calendar apps are closely linked, and you can quickly switch between the two using the buttons here. Receive an email with an appointment in it, and you can quickly add it to your calendar using the tools in the Mail app. You can also quickly switch to the People app and the ToDo app using the tabs/buttons here.

Explore the Windows 10 Calendar App

The Windows 10 Calendar app is a fully integrated planning tool that can be linked up to your email accounts and easily synced to your other Windows 10 devices. Adding new events can be done manually, or you can simply use it to view national and public holidays, all of which are automatically added based on your location.

Add New Event

There are two main ways to add a new event to your calendar. You can either click on the date in the main window or, if the date you want is not in view, you can click the New Event button here. You can then add an event name, location, and a start and end date. Give the event a short description, especially if you plan to share it with a contact. You can do that by adding people using the pane on the right of the Add Event screen.

Monthly View

No matter which view you choose for the main Calendar pane - day, week, etc. - the month preview always shows a full month. You can use the arrows above the mini calendar to skip to different months and clicking on a date brings that date into view on the main Calendar pane. The current day is highlighted in the Month Preview.

Linked Calendars

Your calendar can be linked to your email account, which is shown here. If you are using Gmail for your email account, and have any calendars set up in Google Calendar, these are also shown here. You can use the checkboxes to select and deselect calendars from showing in the main pane; each is colour coded, so you know from which custom calendar an event comes.
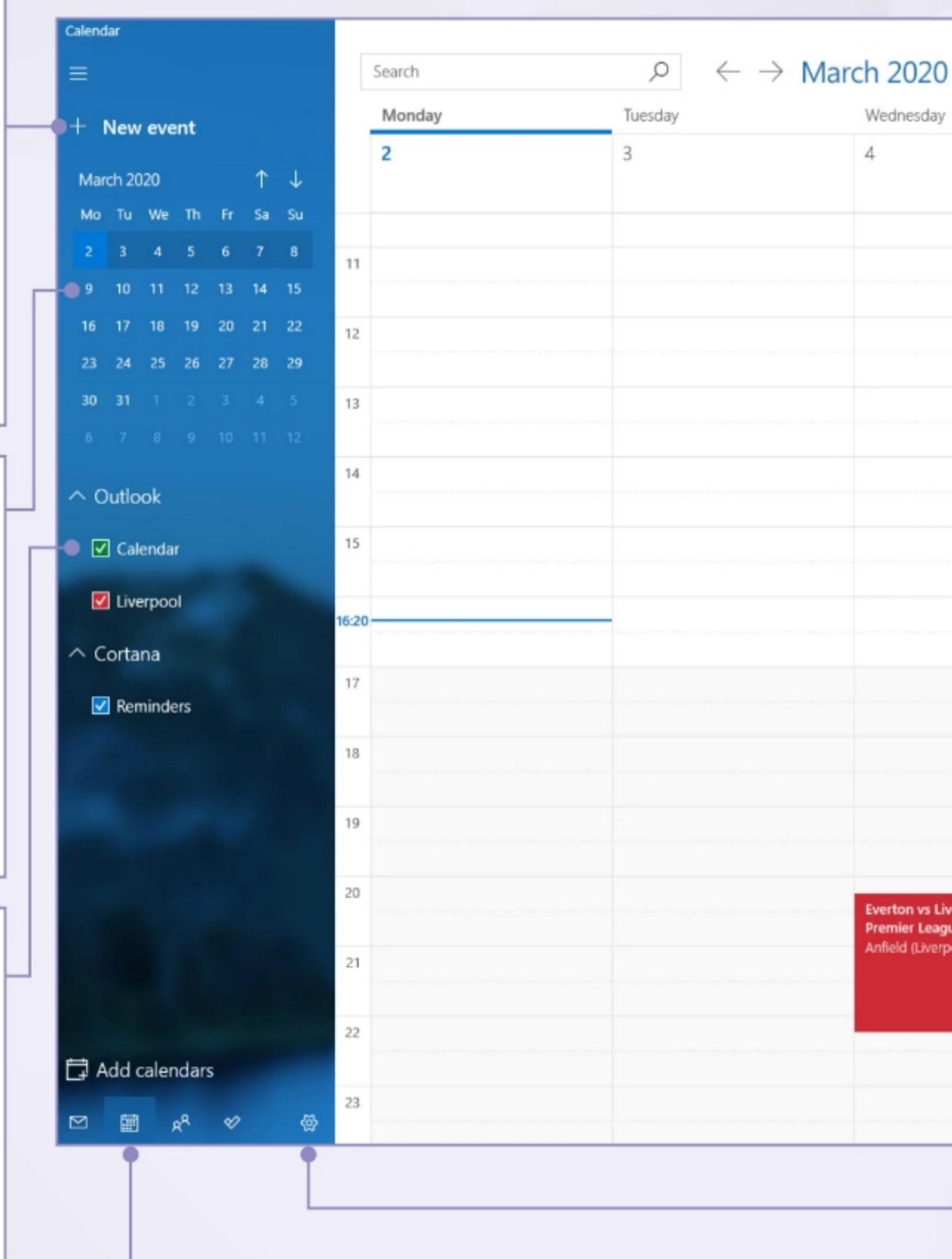
The Edge Menu

Click the Menu button (three small dots in the top right) to open the Edge menu. From this menu, you're able to access Settings, print a page and find words or phrases in the open web page. Another option allows you to pin a particular web page to the taskbar as an icon, should you wish to.


Edge Tabs

New tabs are opened either by clicking on a link (if the link is set to open as a new tab) or by clicking on the small + button at the top left of the browser. You can have lots of tabs open at the same time. Right-click on any tab to see further options such as Reopen closed tabs.


Edge Settings

Clicking the Settings option in the Edge menu opens another menu with further options. Tabs down the side of the menu take you to different settings sections, including Privacy & Security and Advanced. In the General settings, you can change the theme, homepage and other basic options.


Custom Layout

You can change the layout between the three presets by clicking the Gear icon. You can also choose a custom layout. Here, you can enable/disable the Quick links bar, the image of the day and set the visibility level of the content in the news feed. You can also change the browser language.


Edge Theme

In addition to the 'light' default theme of Microsoft Edge, there's an option in Settings to display a black theme. It's becoming a lot more common for applications to have dark themes and the Windows 10 taskbar is dark too. It's a good alternative to having super bright apps.

Extensions

Just like the previous version of Edge, Edge Chromium features extensions, which are downloaded from the Microsoft Store. You can view installed extensions in the Browser Menu > Extensions. There are fewer extensions available for the new version, but this situation will improve as it matures.

EDGE PRIVACY

Microsoft seems to be taking users' privacy choices seriously with Edge Chromium, and you now have a much easier way to control your browsing data and history. The biggest improvement is Tracking Prevention. You can access these settings in Browser Menu > Settings > Privacy & Services.

You can choose three different levels of tracking prevention: Basic, Balanced and Strict. These options all block known harmful trackers, but how personalised content (such as

adverts) is displayed and how well all Website features work depends on the level you choose.

Our advice is to switch to Strict and then see how it affects your favourite websites. If you find things are not displayed as they should be, you can always switch back to Balanced.

You can view sites that you have blocked from tracking you, and also allow exceptions if there are sites which you want to allow to track you.

Tracking prevention

Websites use trackers to collect info about your browsing. Websites may use this info to improve sites and show you content like personalised ads. Some trackers collect and send your info to sites you haven't visited. Learn more

Tracking prevention

Basic

- Allows most trackers across all sites
- Content and ads will likely be personalised
- Sites will work as expected
- Blocks known harmful trackers

Balanced
(Recommended)

- Blocks trackers from sites you haven't visited
- Content and ads will likely be less personalised
- Sites will work as expected
- Blocks known harmful trackers

Strict

- Blocks a majority of trackers from all sites
- Content and ads will likely have minimal personalisation
- Parts of sites might not work
- Blocks known harmful trackers

Blocked trackers
View the sites that we've blocked from tracking you

Exceptions
Allow all trackers on sites you choose

Edge Tools

Now that you understand the basics of using the new Edge browser, let's take a look at some of the features and tools that turn it from a good browser into a great browser.

Immersive Reader If you find the adverts, social links and other elements of a modern website distracting, you can use the Immersive reader in Edge to clear the clutter. Not all pages are compatible, but most are. To enable Immersive reader, open the page and click the Book icon in the Edge address bar.
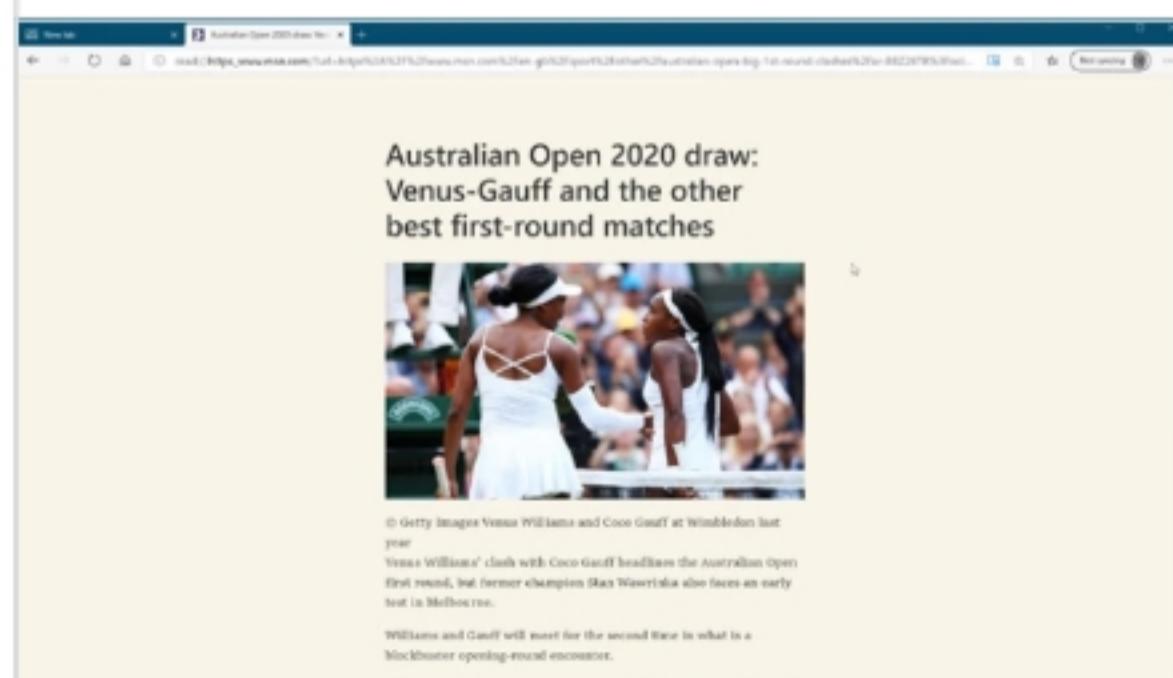
Read Aloud While you are in Immersive reader mode, you have the option to "Read Aloud". This starts a text-to-speech tool, which reads out the text of the Website. You can also do this while viewing a website in normal view (Browser Menu > Read Aloud), but it works better while in Immersive reader.
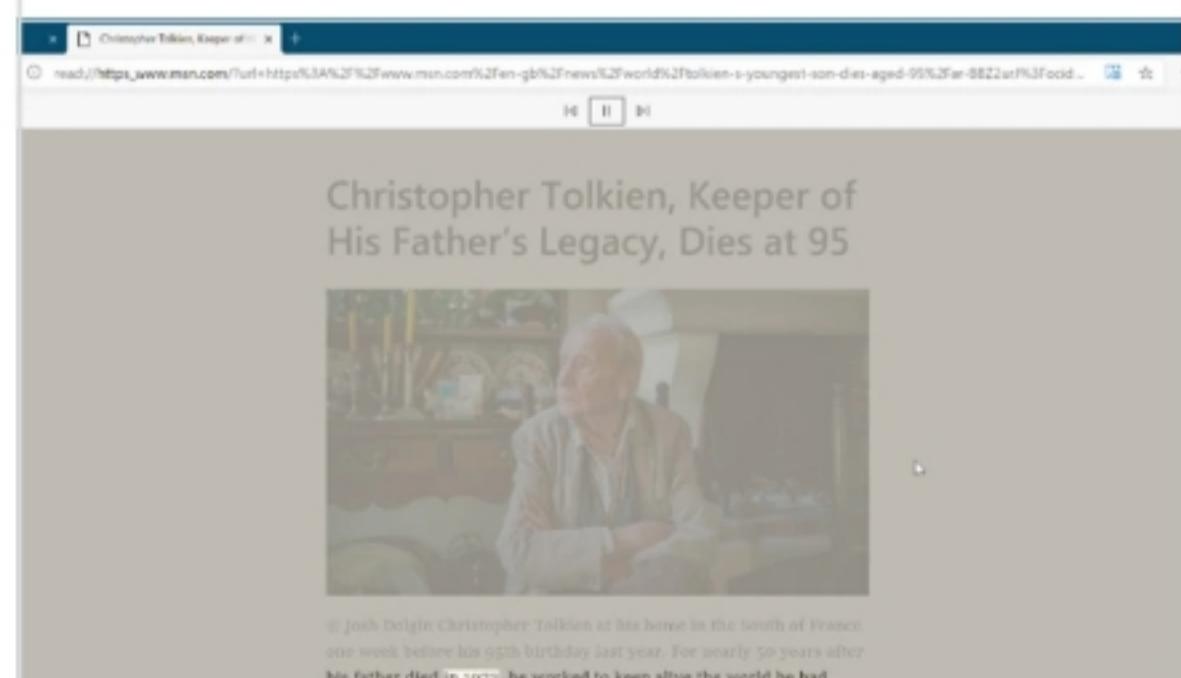
Step 5 All of the main Edge controls run along the top bar. On the far left are the Back, Forwards, Refresh Page and Home buttons. The Set Aside and All Tabs buttons from the old version of Edge are gone. Clicking the + opens a new tab and clicking the small X closes an open tab.
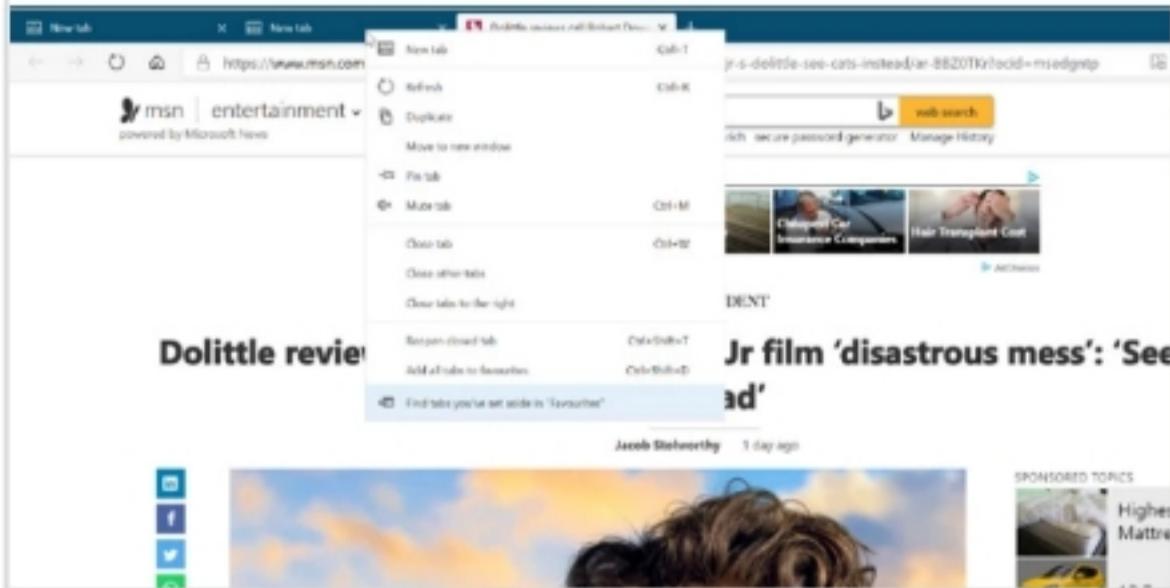
Step 6 The news feed displayed on the Start screen is split into sections: News, Entertainment, Sport, etc. and you can scroll down in each section to see more stories. To go to the source website in a new tab, click on any of the stories in the feed. Click Personalise to choose news categories to display.
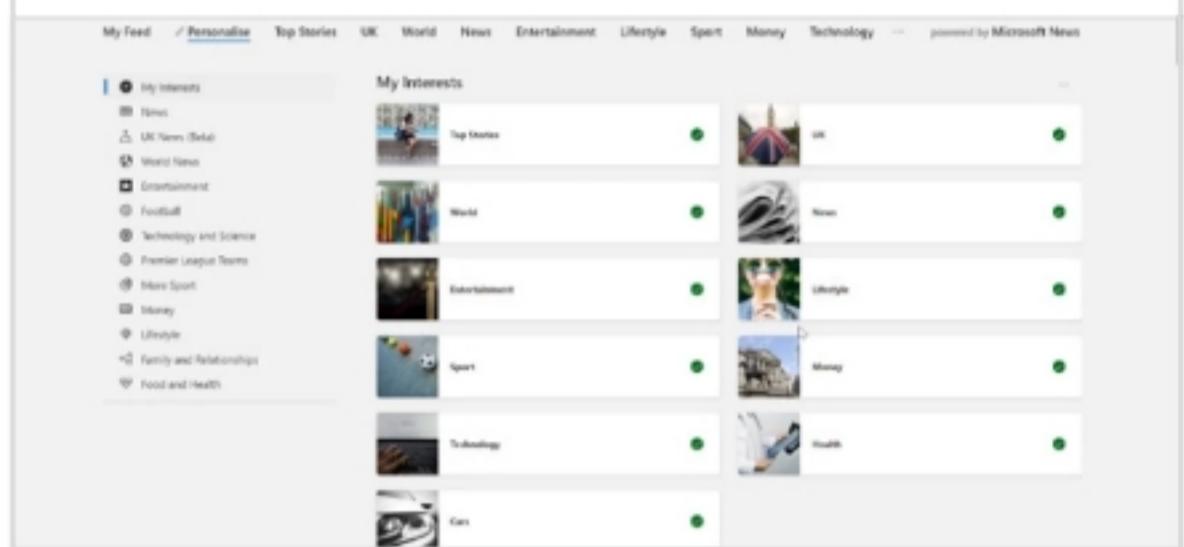
Edge Tools

Lots of the old Edge tools have been removed, including Set Aside Tabs and the ability to write on web pages. There are, however, still lots of tools in Edge.

Favourites To access Favourites, or bookmarked sites, click the button directly to the right of the address bar (star with three lines). Clicking opens a fly-out list, at the top of which is the option to "Manage favourites". This opens the list in a new page, where you can remove or re-order them.
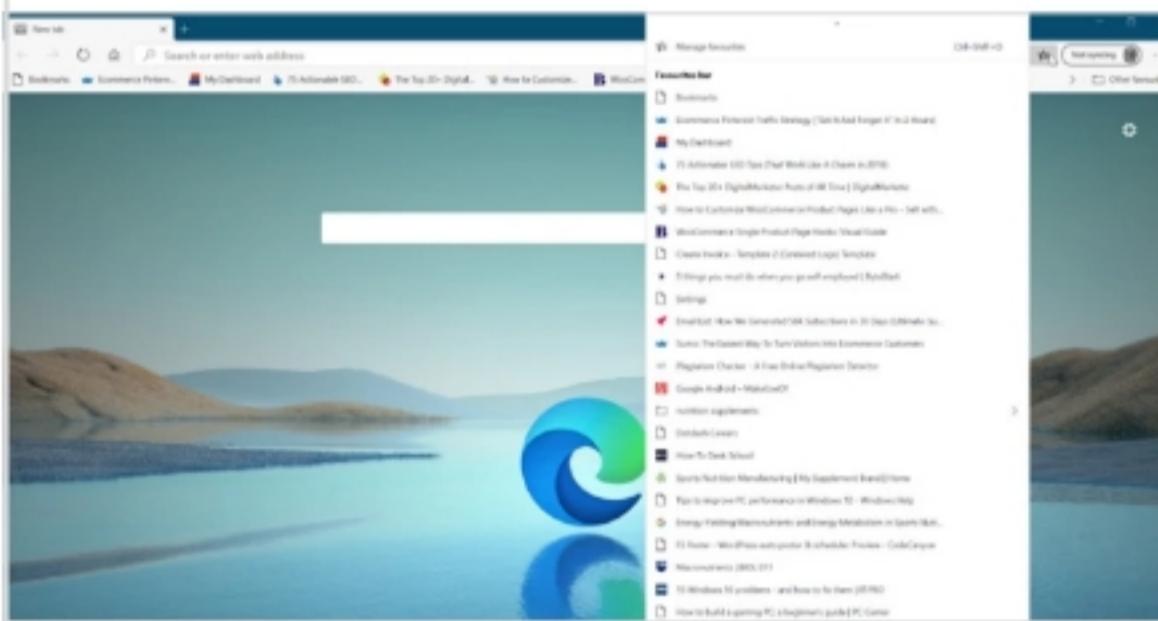

InPrivate Window If you want to browse in private mode when using Edge, you can do so easily. To open a new InPrivate tab, click the browser menu button at the top right and select "New InPrivate Window". You can also open a new private tab by using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + Shift + N while Edge is active.
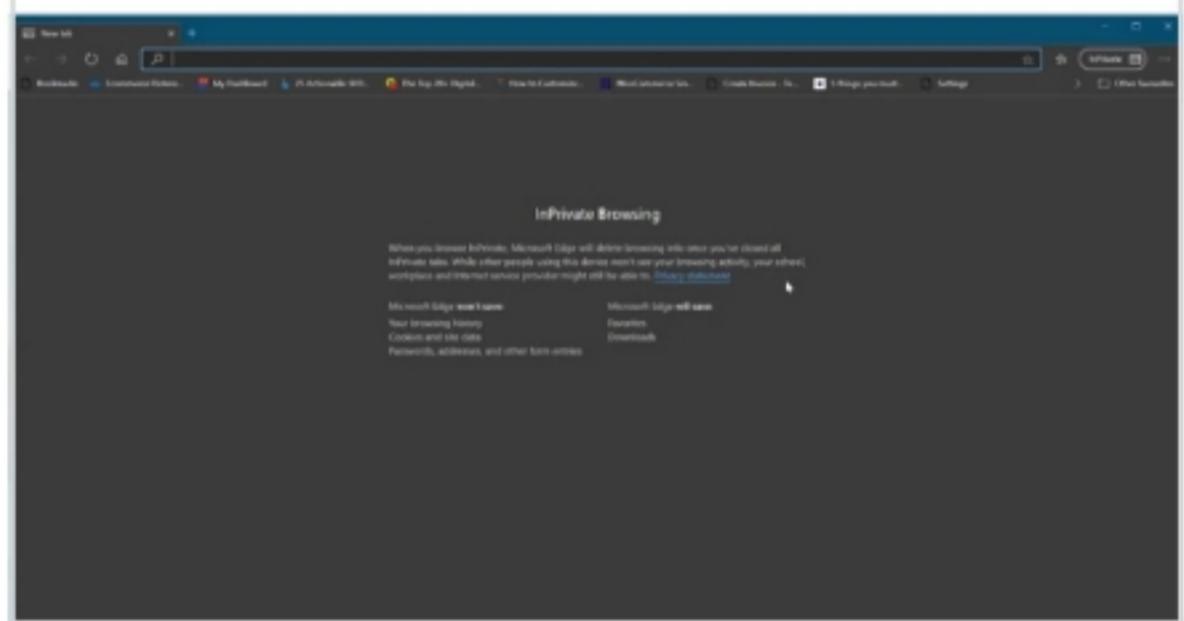
Recent Sites The new Edge start page features a row of icons showing your recently visited websites or pages. Clicking these shortcuts takes you to that site/page instantly. You can also use this tool to show your favourite sites. Just click the + at the end and enter the name and URL of a site you want to add.
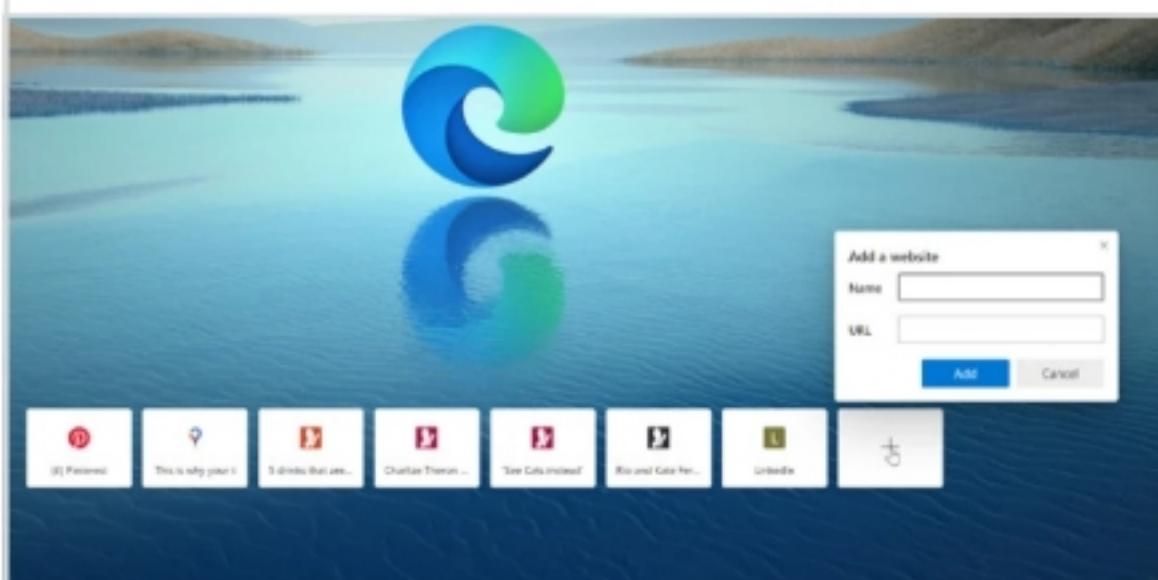
Browser Zoom The option to zoom is also in the browser menu. This increases/decreases the text and image display size in Edge, and will remain at whatever zoom level you set even when you close and re-open Edge. Also available here is a button to switch the Edge window into full screen view quickly.
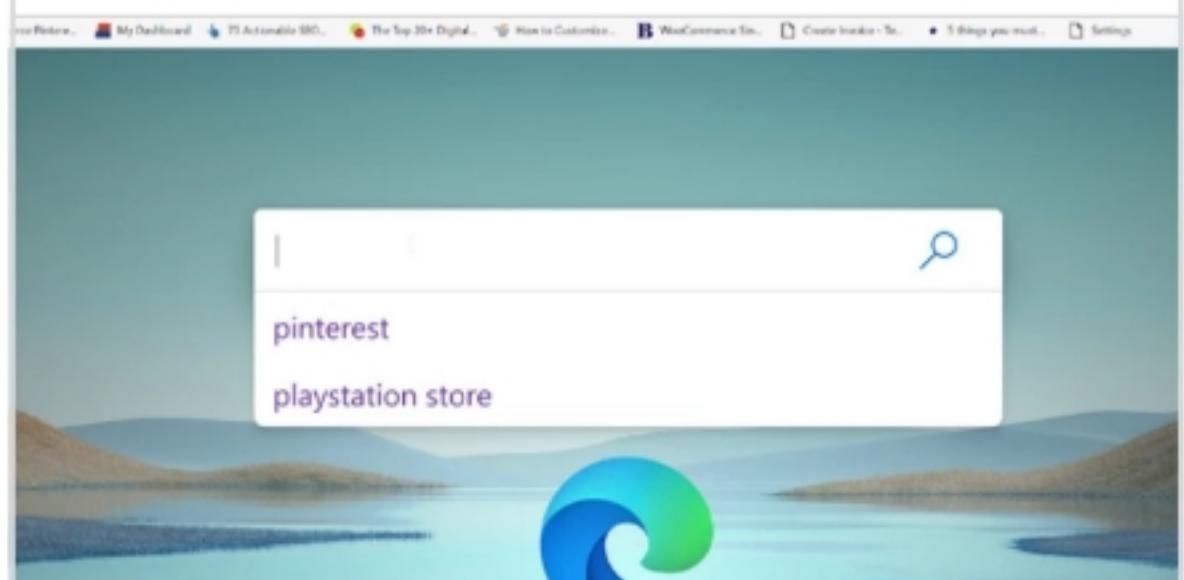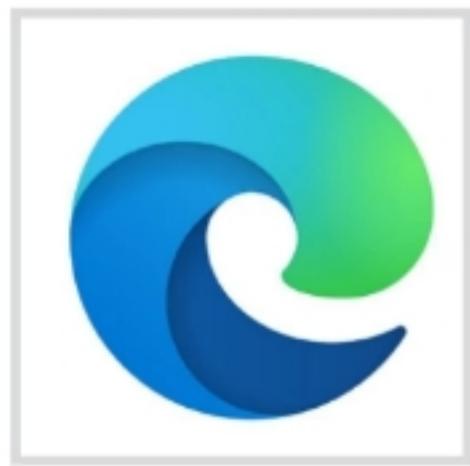
Browsing with Edge Chromium

The latest version of Edge, Edge Chromium, is a significant change and offers a much better browsing experience. Based on the Google Chrome browser, Edge is focused on modern web standards, privacy and security and boasts several new features.

Get Started with Edge Chromium

Edge Chromium feels much less clunky than the previous version and already feels more like the most popular browsers available, such as Chrome or Firefox.

Step 1 If you haven't already updated to Edge Chromium, you can download it from **www.microsoft.com/edge**. Once downloaded, click on the download to install it. The new version automatically overwrites the old version of Edge, completely replacing it on your computer.
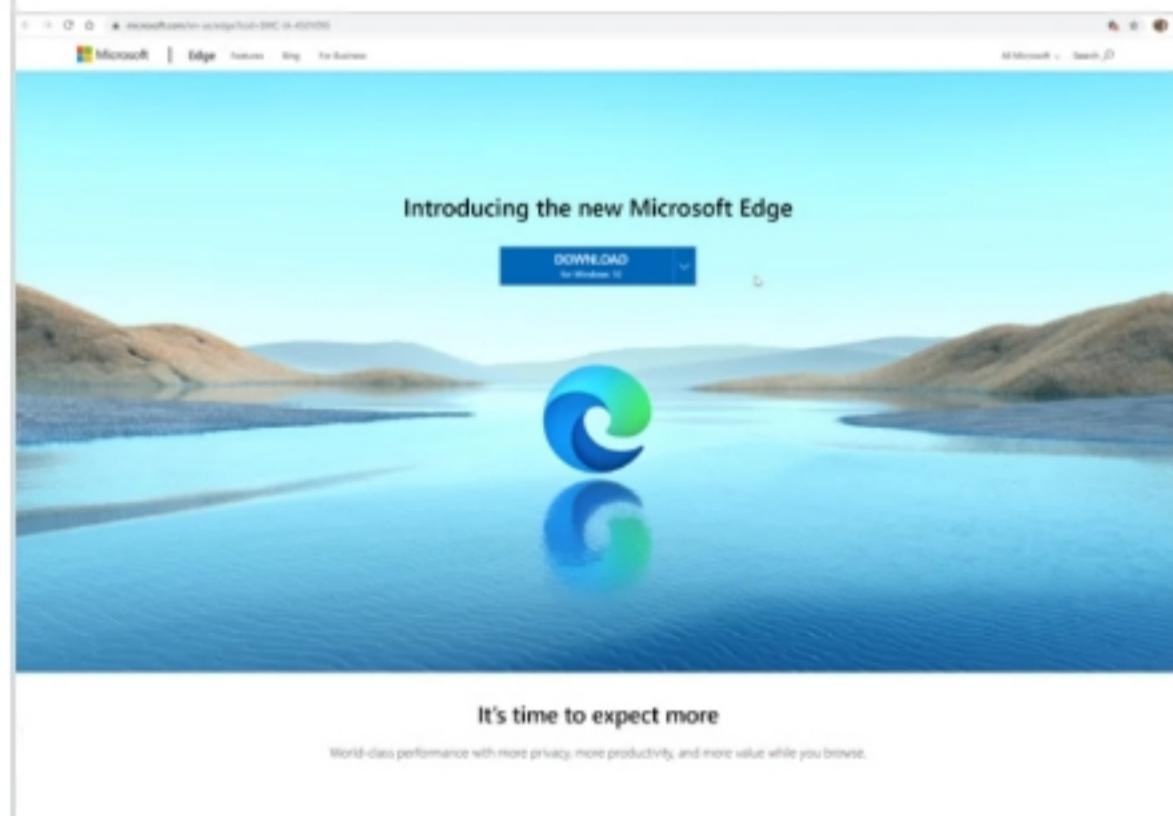
Step 3 Depending on the layout you chose during setup, the start page will either display a news feed or a cleaner page (with the news feed just a scroll away below it). You can check out the other layouts easily by clicking the Gear icon at the top right and choosing from the menu.
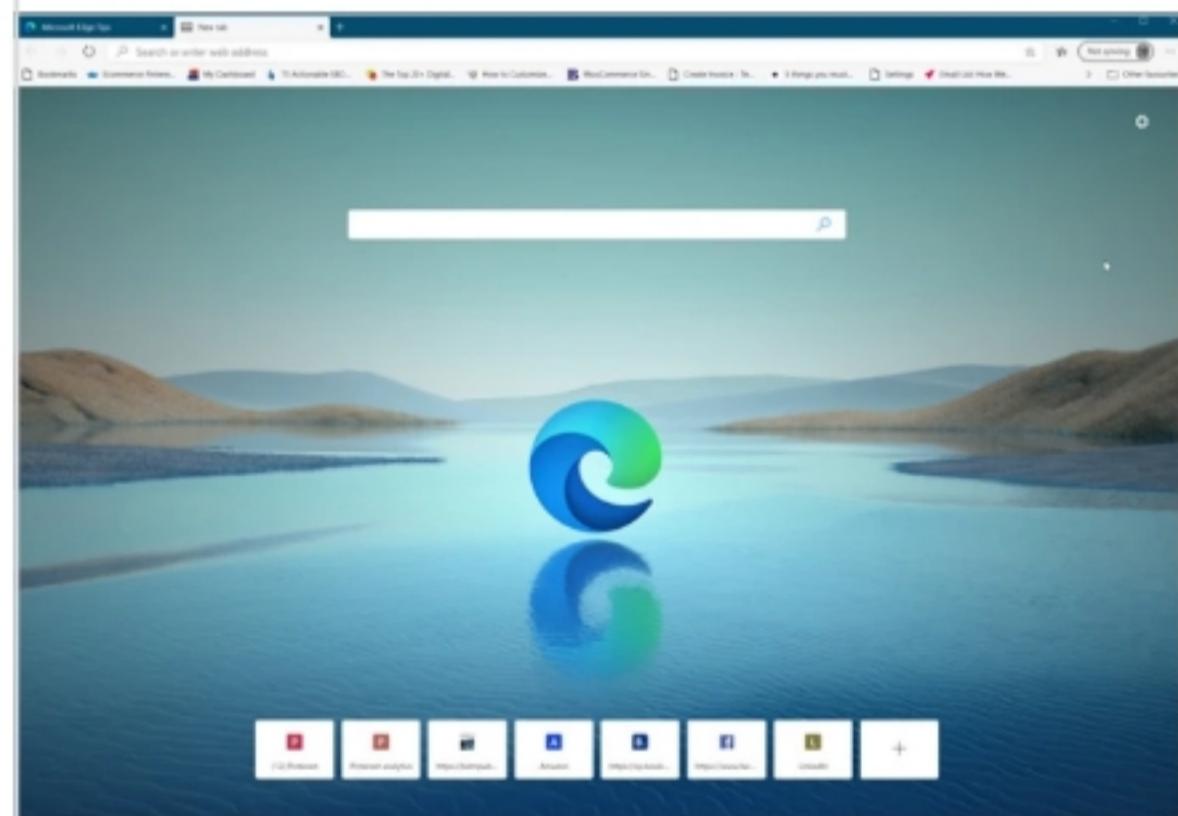

Step 2 During setup, you have the option to import browser data such as bookmarks and favourites from Google Chrome, choose the initial start page layout, and set up syncing across devices (other computers, your phone, etc.) Once installed, Edge opens at the start page.
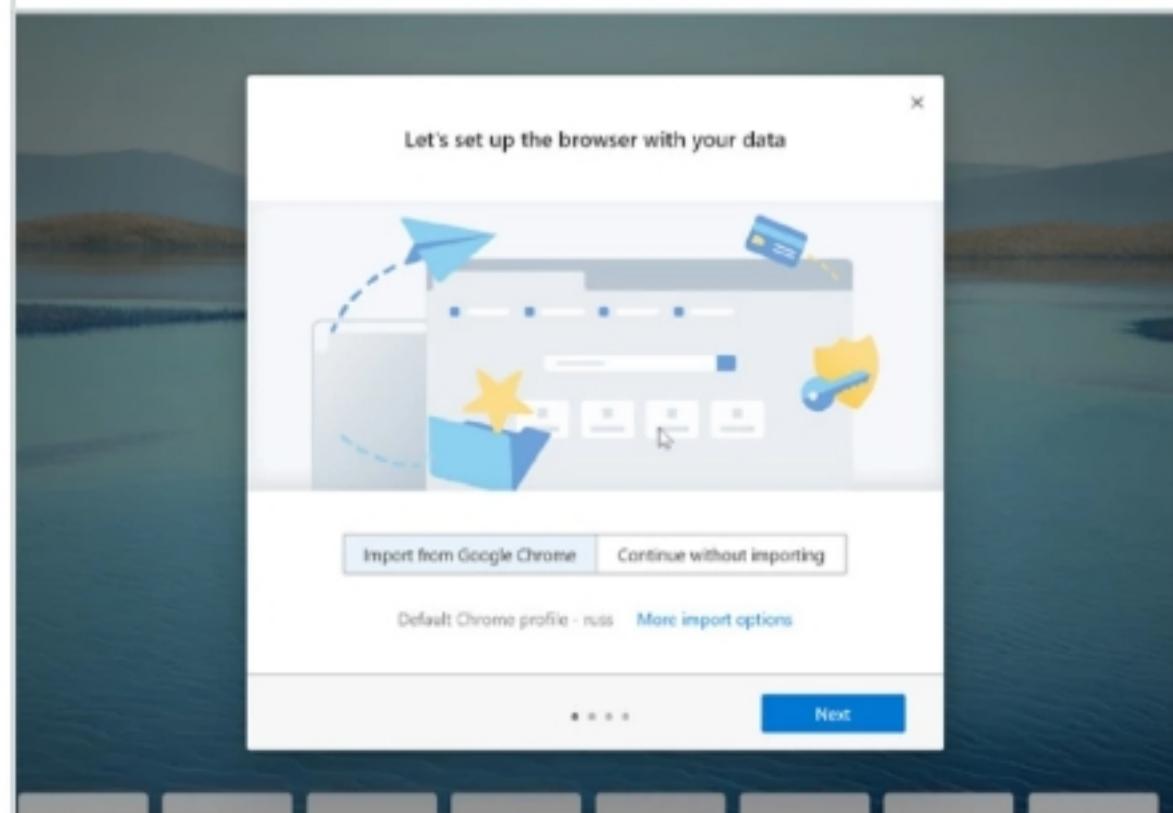
Step 4 To search for a website or web page, you can type in the search field at the top (which is always there), or you can type in the search box floating in the start page. When you type in either box, Edge shows a list of suggestions based on what it thinks you require.
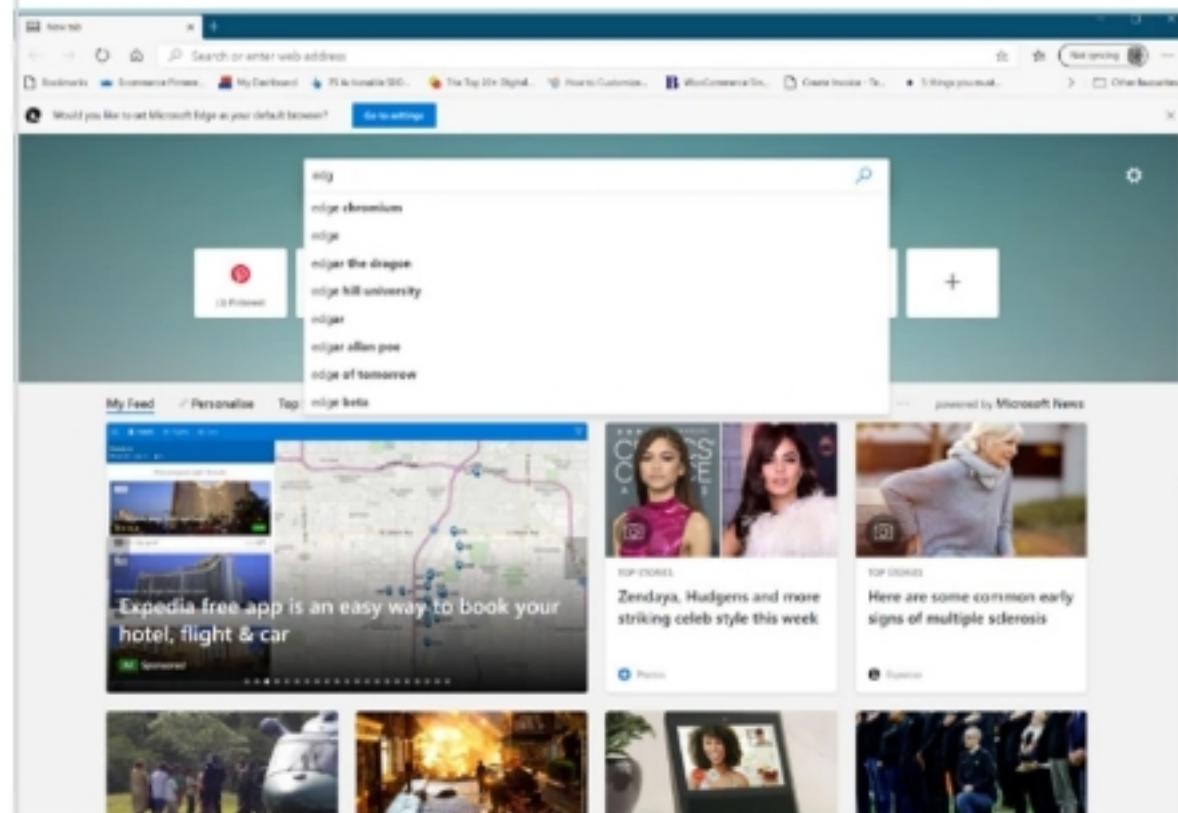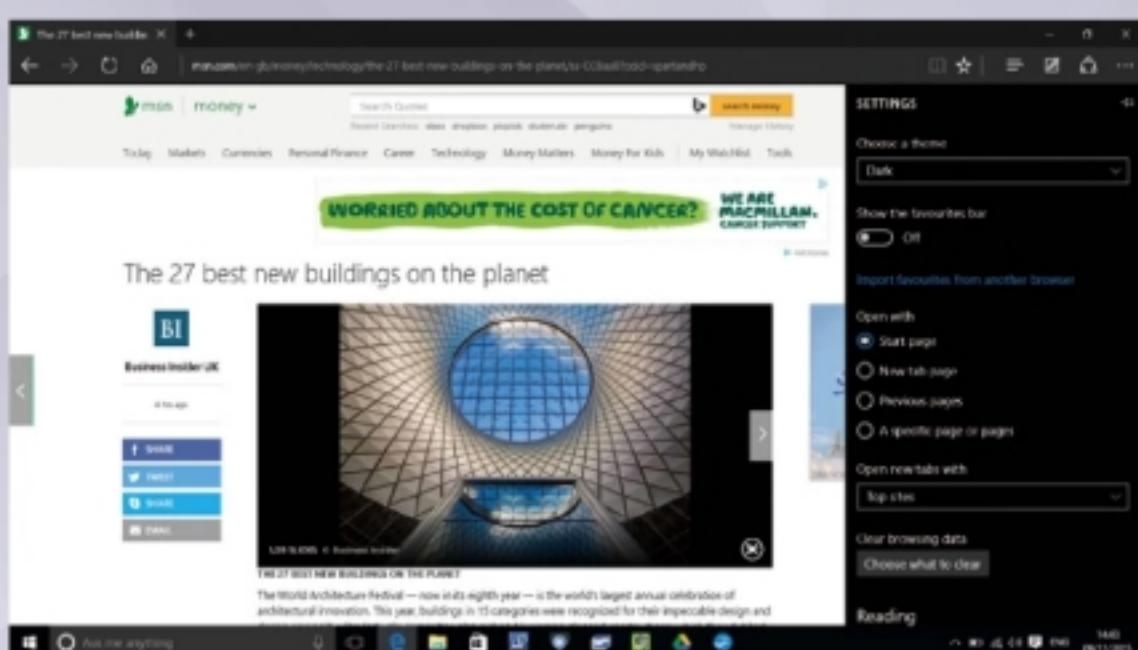
EDGE SETTINGS

Alongside options to change the style of the Edge browser, including changing to a dark theme, are several important settings. You can choose how the Edge browser opens, showing the Start page or another specified page for example. The advanced settings include options to block pop-ups and allow Flash Player.

Favourites

The Hub from the old version of Edge, which contained favourites, history and reading list has gone. Instead, you can access favourites and the reading list combined in a fly-out menu here. Browsing history can now be found in the Browser menu (along with another link to favourites).

Browser Menu

The Browser menu, accessed using the button in the top right corner, contains options to open a new tab, new windows and a private browsing window. There are lots of other tools here, including extensions and "Save page as…". You also access the main Edge settings menu here.

Customise Layout

You can customise the Start screen in several ways here. There are three preset layouts: Informational, Inspirational and Focused. You can also choose a custom layout, which lets you turn on/off individual elements such as pic of the day and the news feed.

Dark Theme

You can switch between light and dark themes in Edge. Or you can use the same theme as Windows 10 or macOS, by selecting Settings and more > Settings > Appearance and choosing an option from the Theme menu. You can also customise things like font display size here.

Exploring the New Edge Browser

The new Edge Chromium browser is subtly different from its predecessor, with several new features added and a few old ones lost. It still has tabs, bookmarks and a reading mode, as well as ways to customise the start page. Let's take a look at Edge Chromium.

Browser Controls

In the top left corner, where you would probably expect to find them, are the browser controls. These include the Home button, the Page refresh button and the Page forward/Page back buttons. Right-click on the active tab to see additional options, including Re-open Closed Tab.

Search Fields

There are two search fields in Edge, one at the top (which is also the address field when viewing a website) and one which floats at the top or middle of the start page, depending on the layout you choose. Use either of these and search suggestions appear as you begin typing.

Recently Viewed/Favourites

A group of icons are displayed for the most recently visited websites/pages. These automatically update as you browse, but can also be edited to show your favourite or most-used sites by clicking on the + symbol at the end of the row of icons.

News Feed

The Start screen of Microsoft Edge is also a News Feed. The news feed is provided by MSN and is made up of news stories based on your geographical location. Either the feed is displayed at the top, or you scroll down to it, depending on the layout you choose. Click "Personalise" to filter the news types.

TuneIn Radio
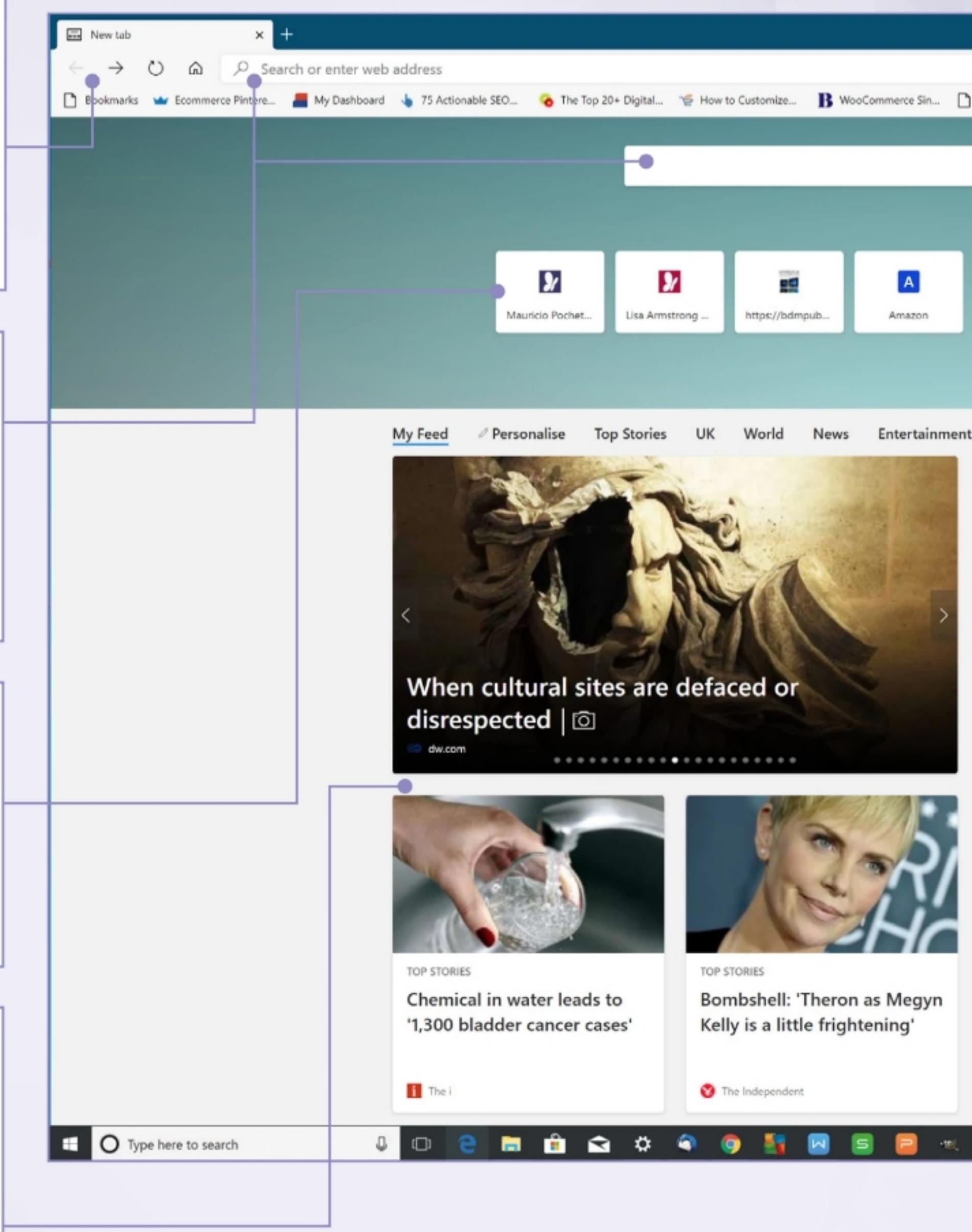
TuneIn brings you sports, music, news, podcasts, and radio live from around the world. Listen to the audio you love and let the moments move you. Listen to commercial-free music curated by leading-edge DJs, live mixes and special guests, coverage from the news sources you trust like CNN, BBC, NPR, Fox, MSNBC & more.


PDF Reader - View, Edit, Share

PDF Reader by Kdan Mobile, a PDF expert for Windows platform, not only enables you to read, annotate, and share Adobe Acrobat PDF documents on your computers and smartphones, it also provides a brand new free-hand drawing and writing experience! Enterprise solution is also available. For more details, check our website.
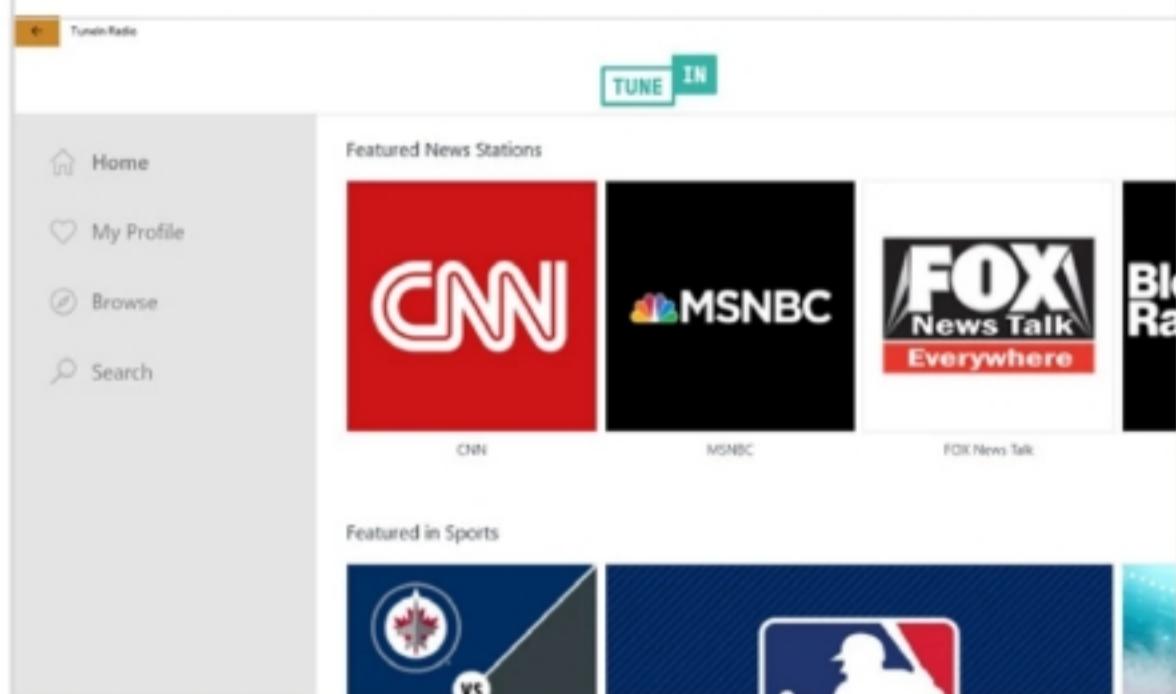
Audiobooks from Audible

Not enough time for all the books you want to enjoy? Download the app by Audible, an Amazon company, and access 200,000+ titles including bestsellers, classics and everything in between. Immerse yourself in a great story anytime, anywhere, by downloading a great story today.

Explore an unmatched selection of audiobooks
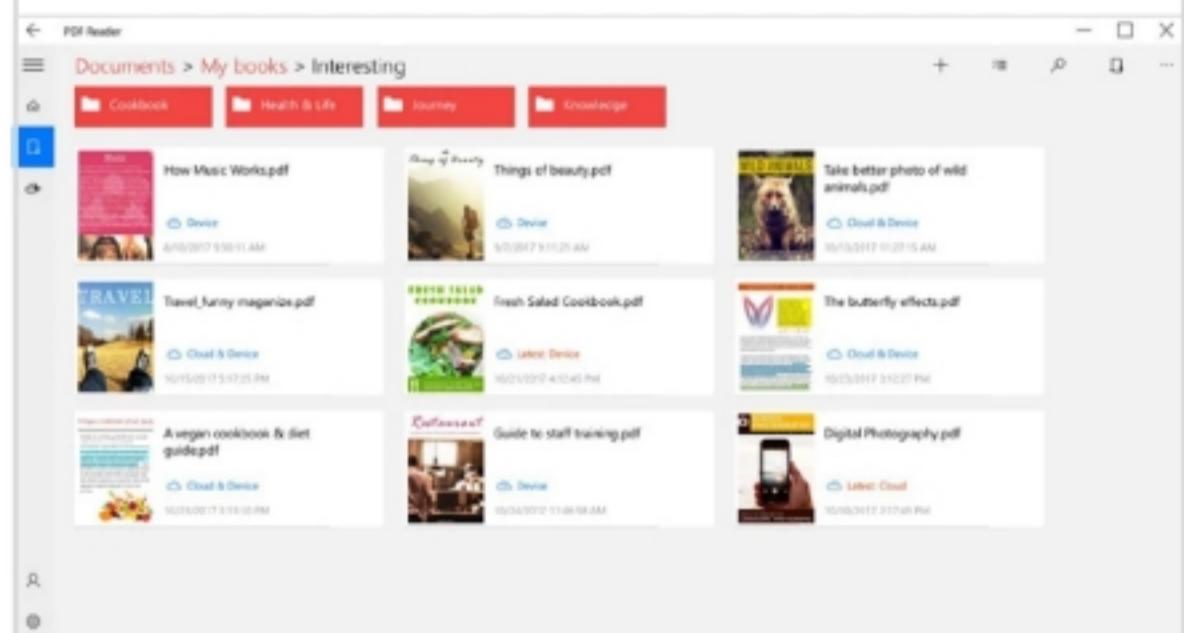
Dropbox

Dropbox brings your cloud content and traditional files together with the tools you love—so you can be organized, stay focused and get in sync with your team. With all your files organized in one central place, you can safely sync them across all your devices and access them anytime, anywhere. Free or paid accounts available.

Get the space you need and so much more

Adobe Photoshop Express

Snap. Edit. Share. Smile. The free Adobe Photoshop Express app provides photo magic at your fingertips. Join millions of creative folks who trust and use Adobe Photoshop Express for fast, powerful, and easy editing. It's the one-stop-shop for your quick and fabulous photo editing needs.
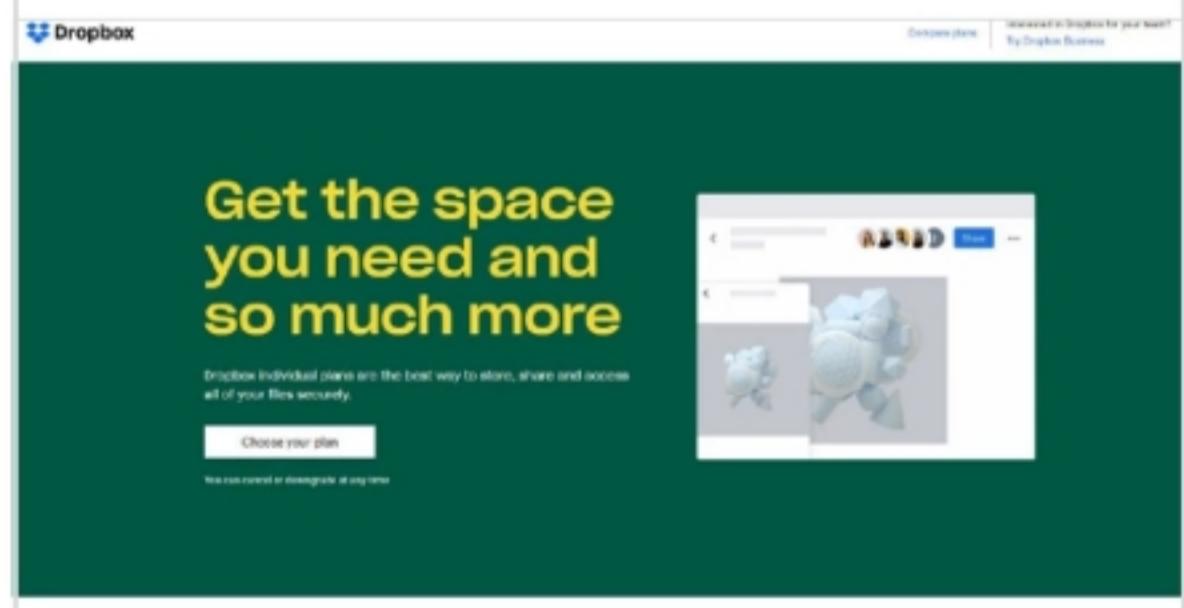
EasyMail for Gmail

Easily access your Google emails, notes and calendar in a standalone app. EasyMail allows you to switch between different accounts with just one click. Benefit from the seamless integration into your operating system and receive native mail notifications. With EasyMail, you always stay up to date without needing to keep your web browser open.

Enjoy Gmail without a browser!
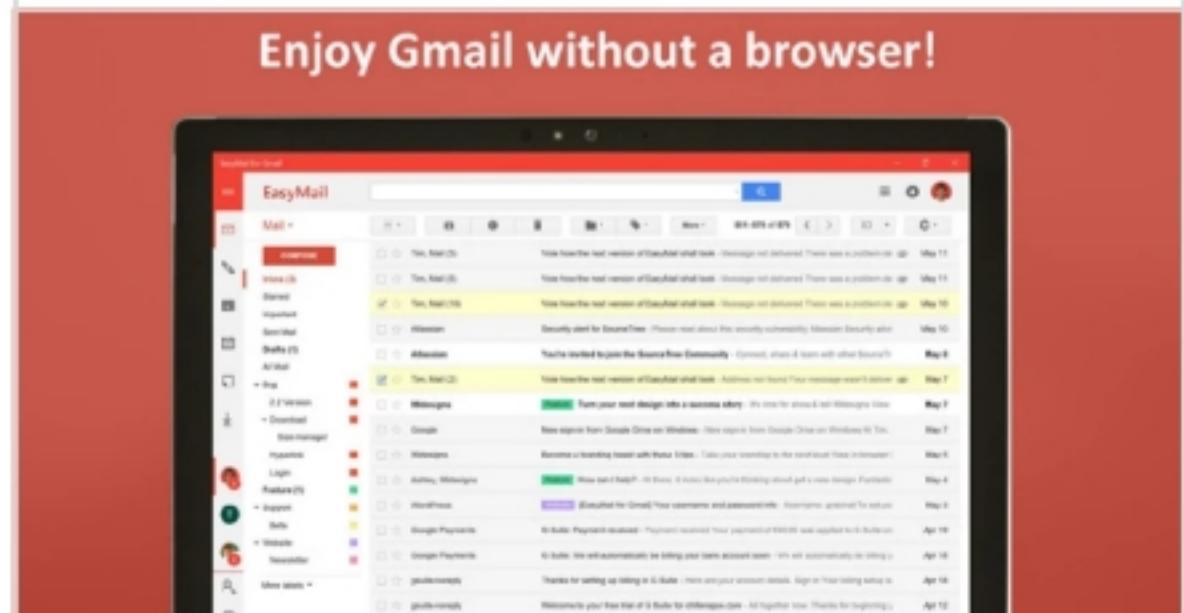
Ten Essential Windows 10 Apps

The Windows Store is crammed full of useful apps for your computer, from well-known names like Spotify to little-known but useful apps like Pin More. Here, we will take a look at some of the best, most useful, or just unique apps available to download right now.

Netflix

Netflix is the world's leading subscription service for watching TV episodes and movies. Netflix membership gives you access to unlimited TV programmes and films for one low monthly price. - With the Netflix app, you can instantly watch as many TV episodes and films as you want, as often as you want, any time you want.

File Viewer Plus

Are you tired of cluttering your PC with dozens of apps? The free version of File Viewer Plus allows you to open over 150 different file types with one, simple app. Open documents, spreadsheets, presentations, images, audio files, video files, archives, and much more. Save both time and money with File Viewer Plus.

Pinterest

Looking for creative ideas? Whether you're planning your next big travel adventure, searching for home design concepts, or looking for fashion & fitness tips; check out new recipes, or explore lifestyle inspiration, on Pinterest. Discover billions of possibilities for every part of your life, from new recipes to creative home design ideas.
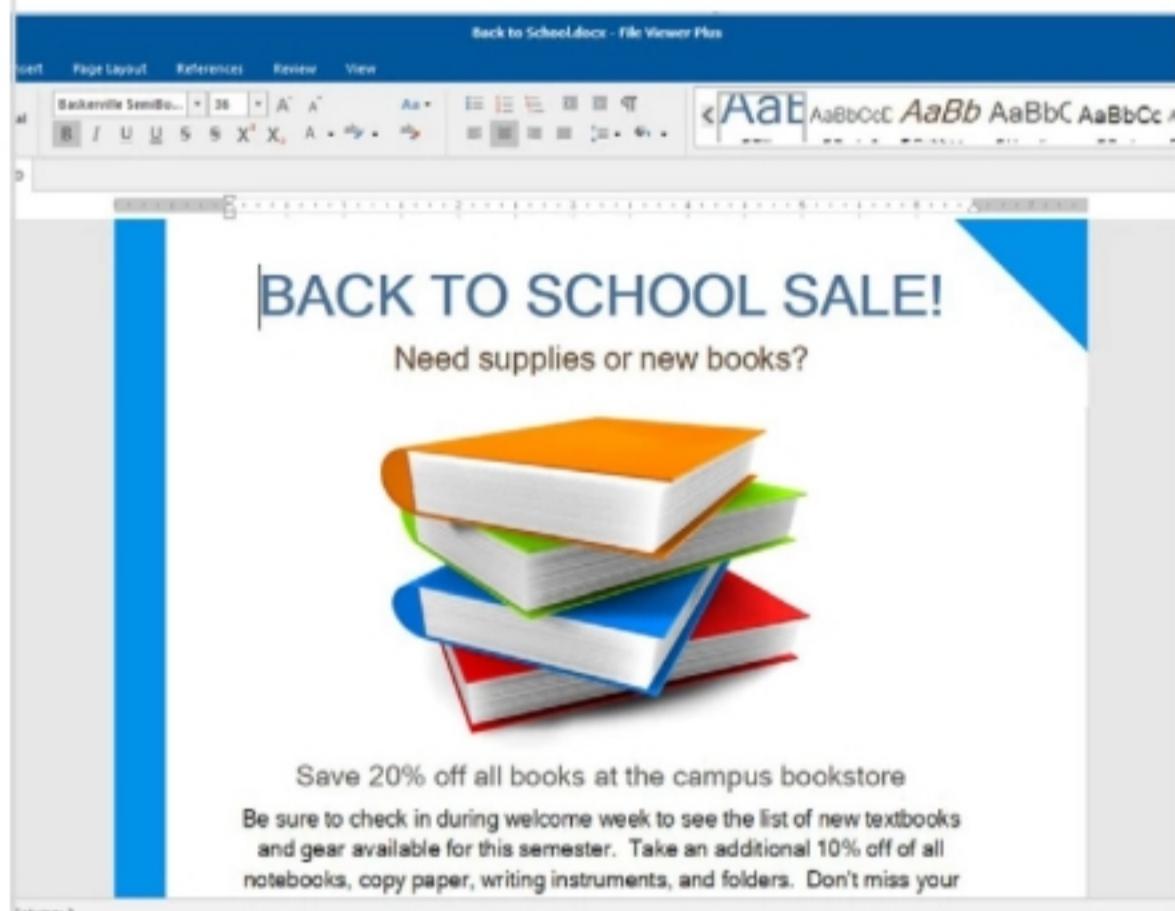
One Calendar

The most popular all-in-one app for viewing all your calendars including Google, Live, Outlook, iCloud, Exchange, Office365 and Facebook. It integrates all your calendars into an easy-to-read overview. View and manage all your appointments, events and birthdays. Easily filter the appointments you would like to see.
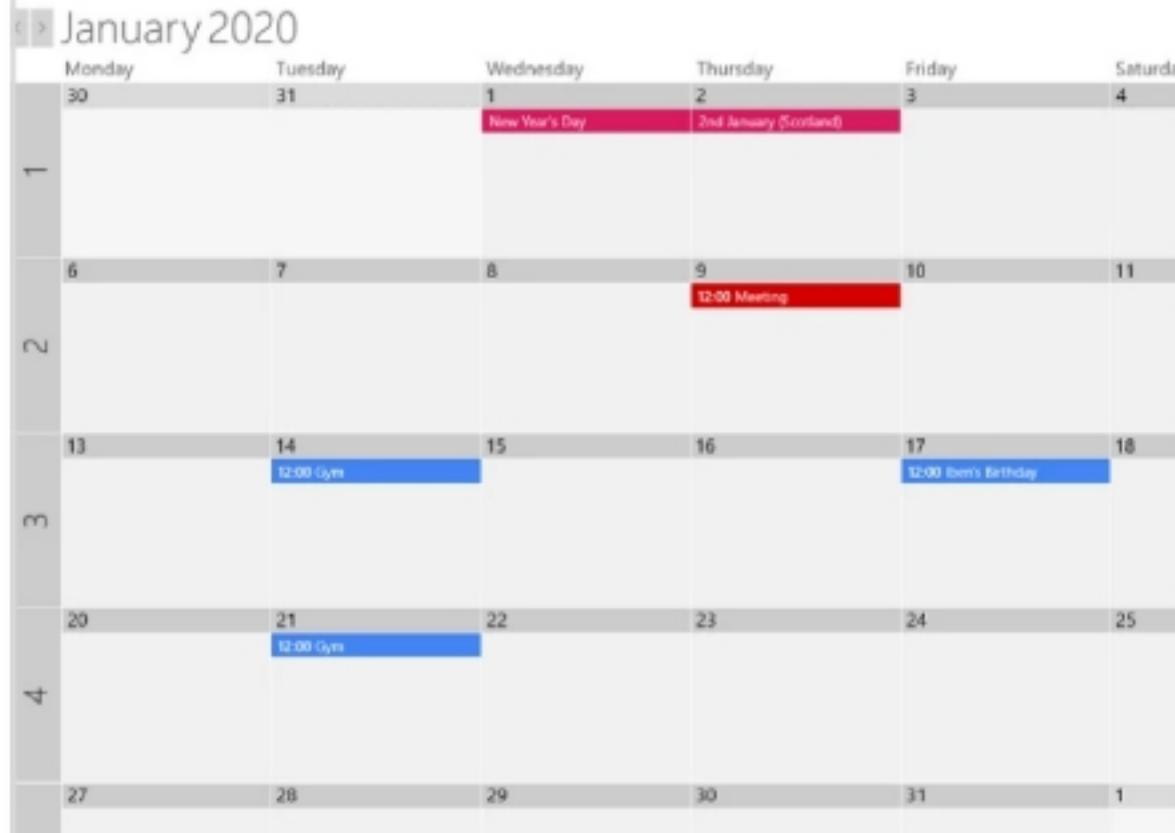
Step 5 Here's what it looks like if you go to an album page in the Music section. Like the movie page in the previous step, there's a Buy link but no button to rent as there is with movie downloads. With movies you can also choose to watch the trailer, while you can preview a snippet of music.
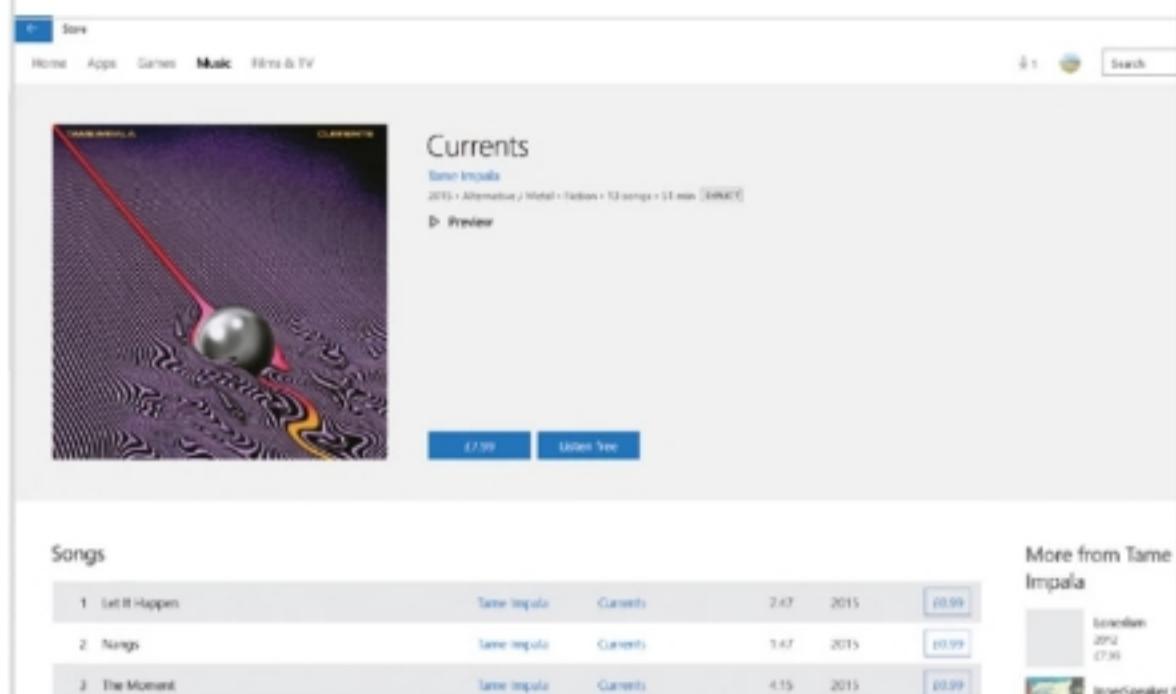

Step 6 You're also able to buy single tracks, too – here they're 99p. At every stage the Windows Store will select other appropriate content for you to look at (often from the back catalogue or related artists), while you can also click any artist or album name to go to the relevant page.
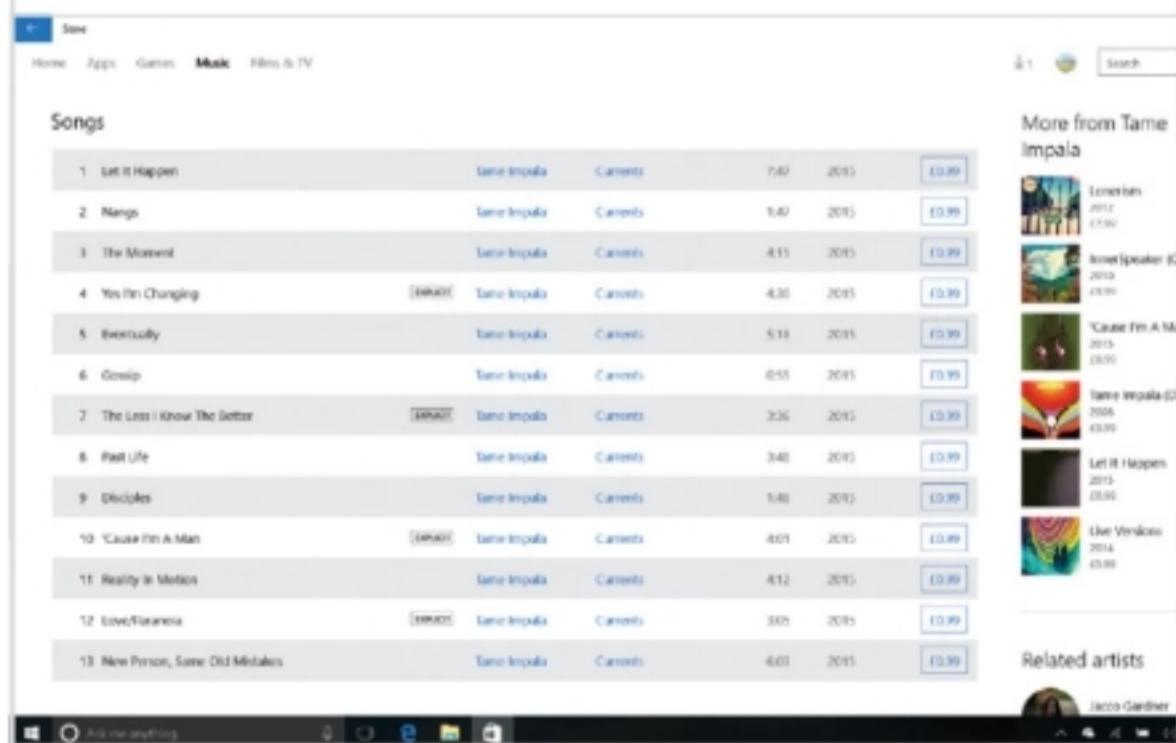
Step 7 Should you wish to, you're also able to join Microsoft's subscription music service Groove Music Pass. We've talked more about the service in our Groove Music app tutorial, but essentially it gives you unlimited access to the Windows Store music catalogue and you can listen on basically any device, including Android and iPhone. There's a 30-day trial but the service usually costs £9/$12.60/€10.25 per month.
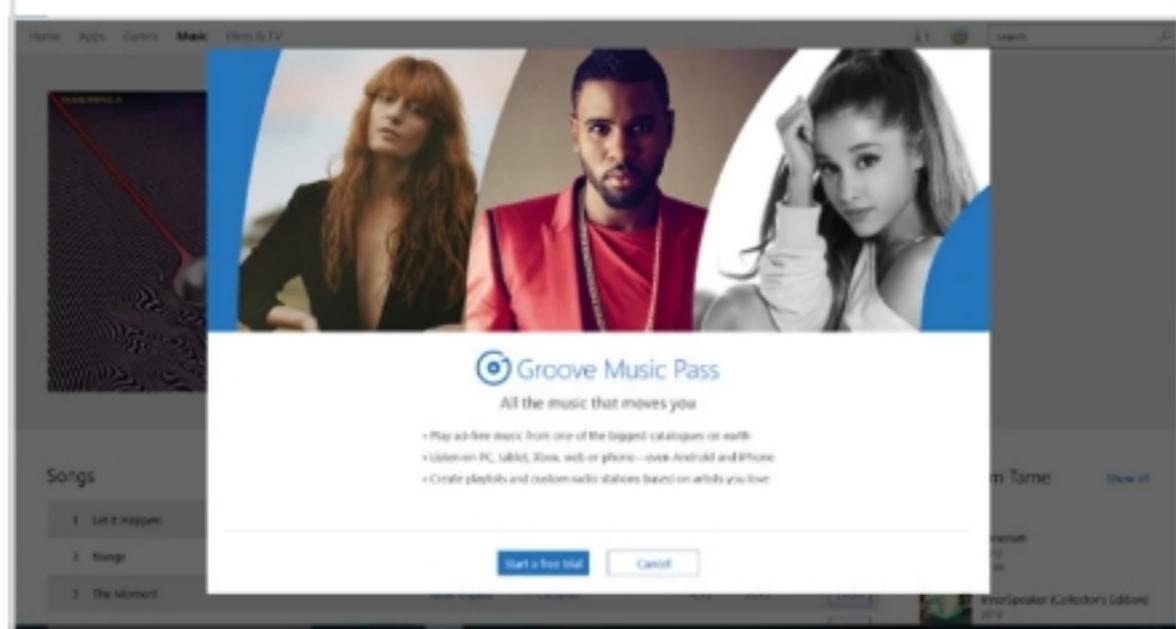
Step 8 You don't have to pay for most apps on the Windows Store. There are stacks of apps you can get hold of for free. Each app has a helpful star rating and user reviews, so you can always see which apps aren't ones that are recommended by others.
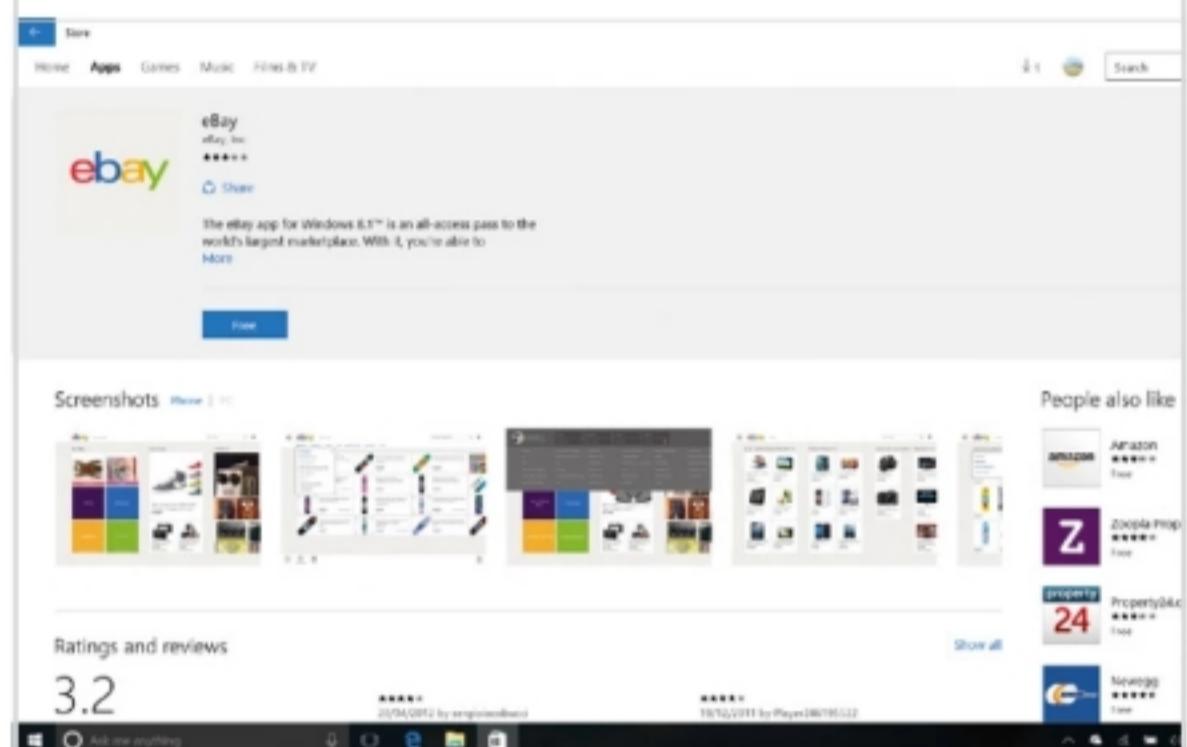
Step 9 When you download an app or other content, it will be added to your download queue. Apps will download and then install relatively quickly but other content – especially HD movies – could take longer. You can also click the blue Check for Updates button to check for app updates, though these will install automatically.
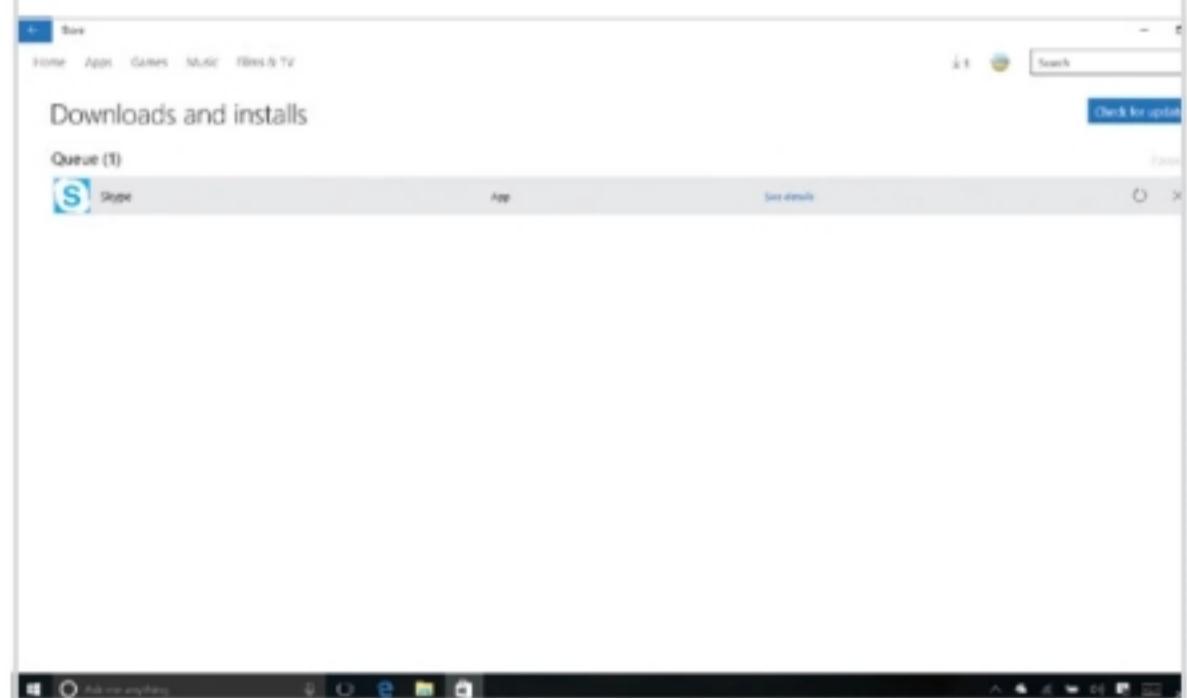
Step 10 Paid-for apps use your credit or debit card. This is all connected to your Microsoft account and you can view your current account and billing information at account.microsoft.com. You can have multiple payment options should you choose to. At the Microsoft account site you're also able to view what Microsoft services (like Groove Music Pass) you're currently signed up to.
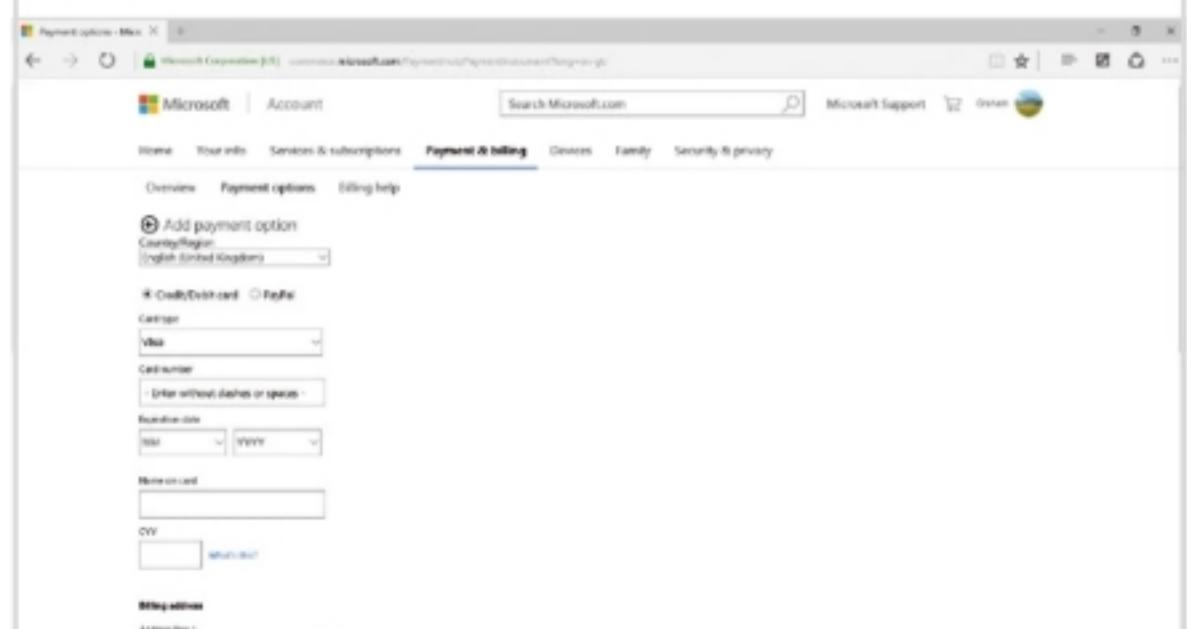
Find Apps and Windows Downloads

There was a Windows Store inside Windows 8 but Microsoft has a new version inside Windows 10. That's because, like the new so-called 'Universal' apps, the Store will work across all Microsoft devices including Windows Phones and the Xbox One.

Take a Look Around

The great thing about the new Windows Store is that the quality of the apps has improved, so it's actually worth browsing. But aside from better apps, the whole experience of looking for new software has been improved in Windows 10.

Step 1 As well as being more responsive to use, the Windows Store has improved vastly in terms of content – as well as apps and games there are now movies to buy or rent and music to download. You can switch between the major sections using the buttons at the top of the window.

Step 2 Clicking on one of these main sections – here we've clicked on Apps – takes you to a Browse screen where you're presented with the latest apps as well as those that are growing in popularity at the moment. You can also refine your search using the categories on the left – say you just wanted to see Education apps, for example.

Step 3 Each section also features charts of the most downloaded apps as well as curated app recommendations. Here the selection is reasonably uninspiring but presumably this would improve as you downloaded more apps. You can also easily flick through the top free and paid apps.
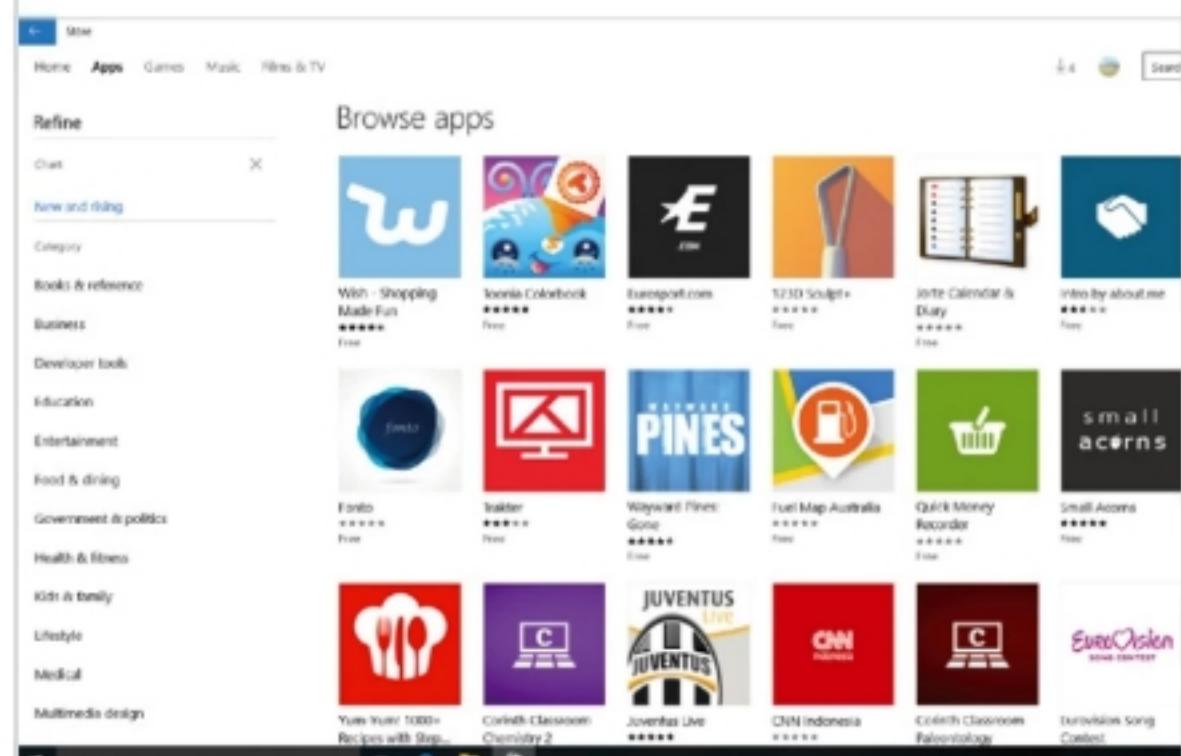
Step 4 As in many Windows 10 apps, there's a search box in the top right. The search will pick up results from across the Store, whatever you search for. Here we've found a film we'd like to see. This page is roughly the same whether you're looking at a game, movie or app.
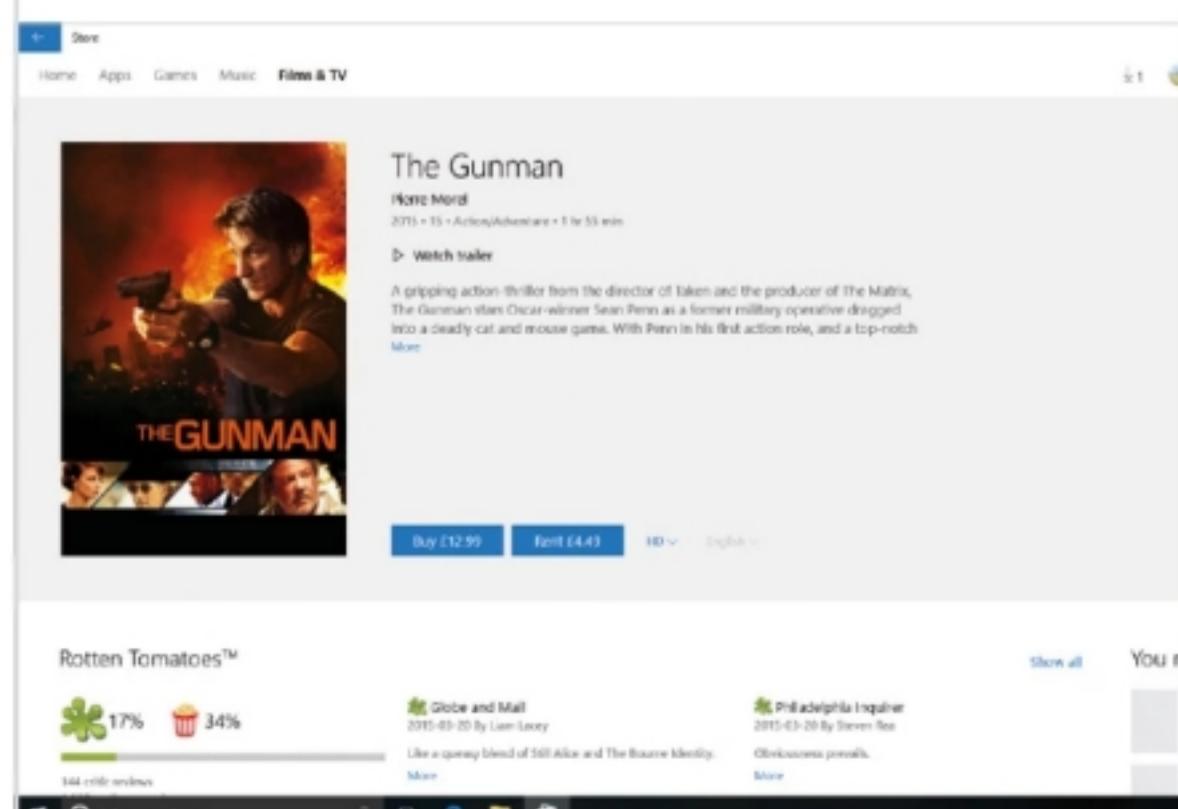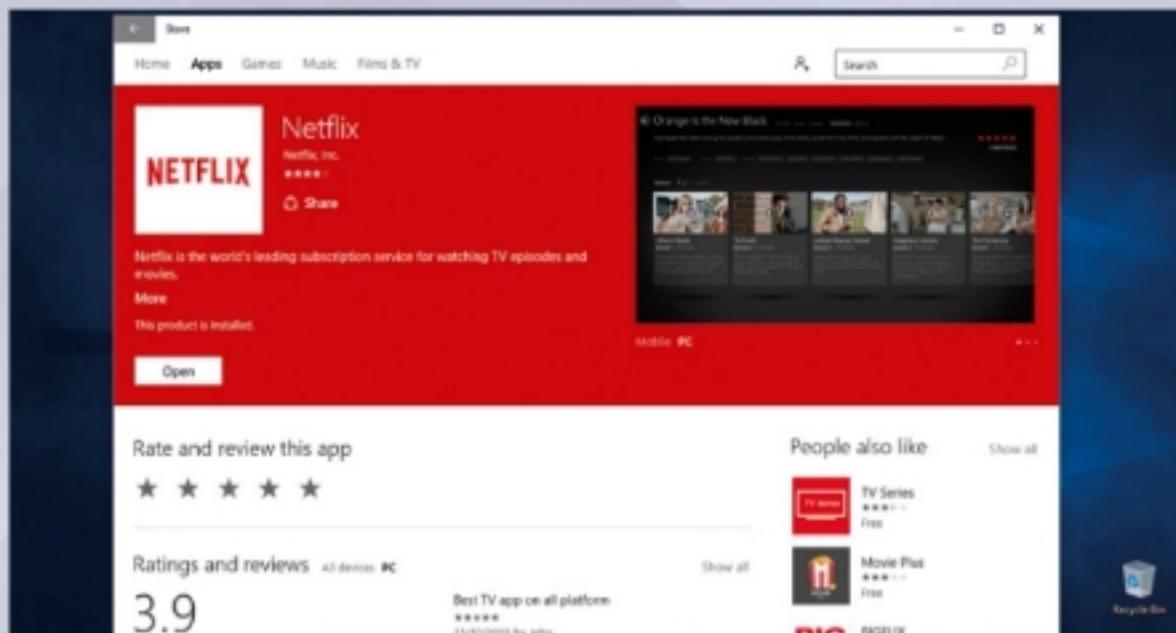
APP INFO SCREEN

Once you have found the app or game you want to install, click on the icon to open the app info screen. This screen displays the average app score, user reviews, similar app suggestions, as well as a list of features and updates. Click the Free, Buy or Try button to install the software.

Downloads/Updates

If there is an update or new download available for any app you currently have installed on your computer, a notification will appear here. The number shows how many updates/app downloads are waiting. Click the arrow and select the required action (update, retry etc.).

Store Settings

Click the small Account icon here to see the store settings option. Here you will find details of the Microsoft account currently being used, along with several sliders used to control things like automatic app updates. You can also control who can install new apps on your PC.

Search Bar

You can use the main search bar in the taskbar to search for apps, games, music and films in the Windows Store (store results will have the store icon next to them in the results list). Alternatively, you can search just inside the store by using this search bar.

Windows Store Offers

Periodically, the Windows Store will feature offers for its users. This could be a free Groove Music 30 day trial, or other download offers. Click on the link to read more about the offer and then follow the instructions to take advantage of it.

Explore the Windows Store

Windows 10 comes with great built-in apps including Skype and OneDrive, but that's just the beginning. The Windows 10 Store has loads more to help you stay in touch and get things done, plus more games and entertainment than ever before, many of them free! Expanding your PC's versatility will depend on being able to navigate the app store.

Category Tabs

Just as with other online app stores, the Windows Store features several different download categories. These include Apps, Games, Music and Films. Each category has its own Home screen, which displays: Most Popular, Top Free and Trending sections.

Featured Apps

The Featured Apps slider will display those apps or games that are trending or have been particularly popular. This display is constantly updated and is a good way of finding out what other Windows 10 users are using and playing.

Software Charts

These links take you to lists of the most popular and most downloaded apps and games on the Windows Store. Once you click on one of the links, you can further refine the chart using the links on the left-hand sidebar. Filters include Top Free, Top Paid, Best Rated and New & Rising.

Apps and Games

As you scroll down the main page of the App, Game, Music or Film Home screens, you will see additional sections showing Most Popular, Top Free, etc. If you want to see all of the apps in a particular section, click the Show All button on the right.

Exploring Windows 10 Apps

From using both old and new features, like the Microsoft Store, email and Skype, to making the most of every photo you upload, this section is all about getting more from the wide variety of software, tools and features Windows 10 offers to those users prepared to explore.

Contents
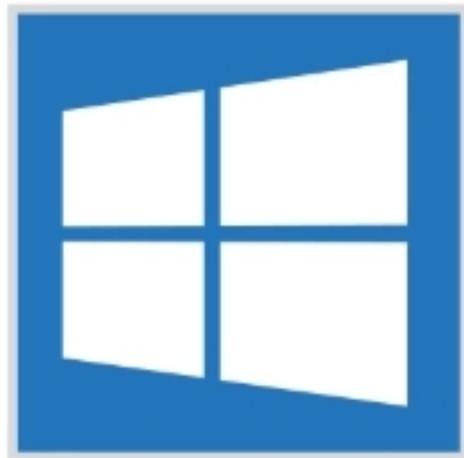
Using the Focus Assist Tool

Focus Assist allows you to create distraction-free periods by blocking alerts, notifications and other sounds. Turn on Focus Assist to stop distractions like social media or alternatively set it to turn on automatically at certain times during the day.

Blocking Notifications

Choose which notifications you want to see and hear. The remainder of your alerts will go into the Action Center so you can see them at a more convenient time.

Step 1 You can easily activate Focus Assist using the quick actions panel in the Action Center. The default setting is Off. Click the Quick action button once to allow priority notifications only, click it a second time to allow alarms only. Click the button a third time to turn Focus Assist off again.
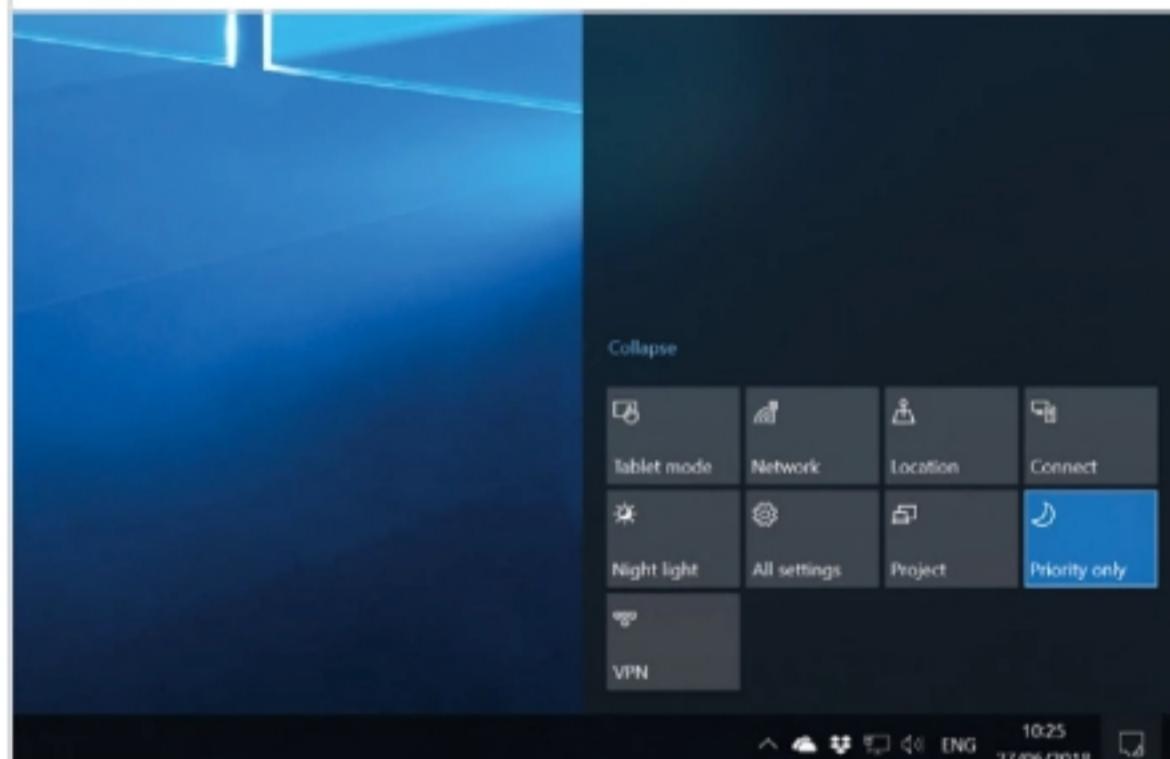
Step 3 To set an automatic rule by time, click on the option and then click the slider to On. You will now see menus to set start time, end time and whether to repeat the rule daily, just on weekdays or just on weekends. The focus level lets you choose if this applies to priority notifications or alarms.

Step 2 You can also turn Focus Assist on or off in the main settings (settings > system > focus assist). Once there, you can also set up your automatic rules and customise your priority list. You can set automatic rules based on times, when you are duplicating your display or when playing a game.
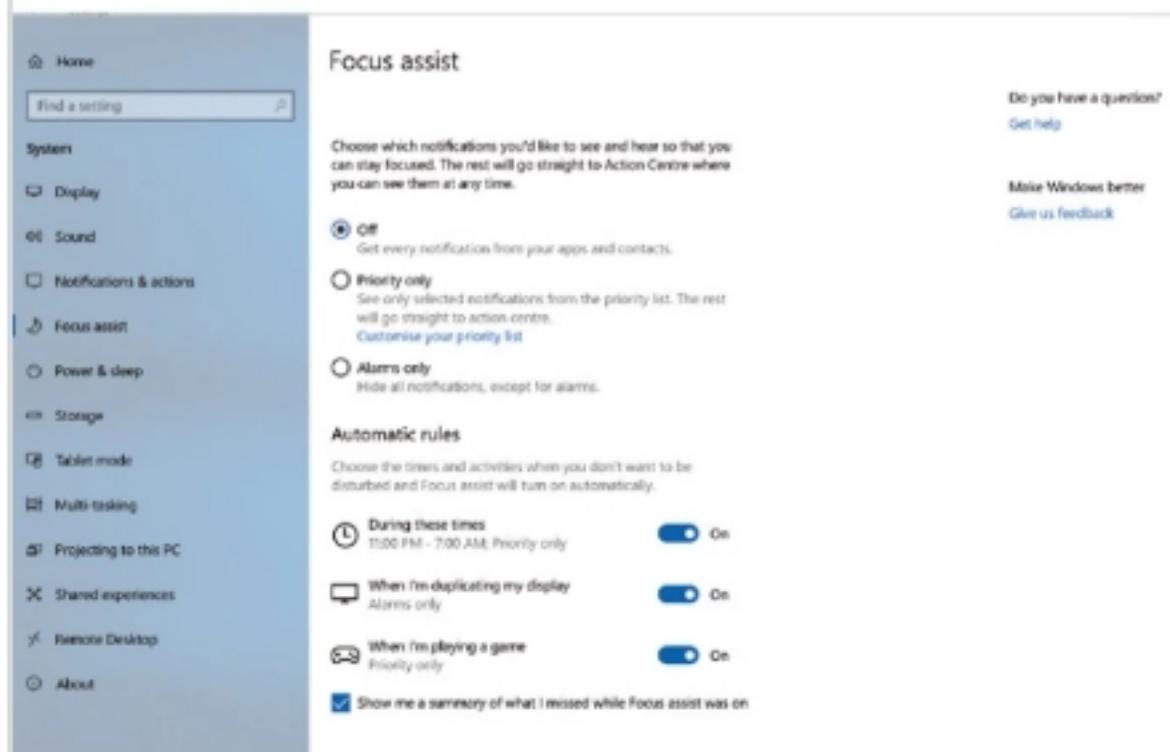
Step 4 If setting Focus Assist to priority, you can set a priority list by clicking 'Customise your list'. Here you can add or remove specific apps, people or Windows 10 features that notify you. When you turn off Focus Assist (manually or automatically), a summary of missed notifications can be shown.
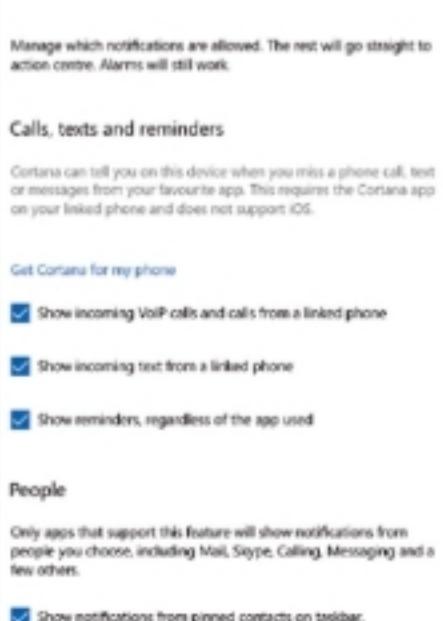
Step 5

If all is successful, you should now see your phone displayed in the Your Phone app on your computer. There is a new screen displayed on your phone, this shows the settings for the Microsoft companion app, alongside to which Windows 10 computer it is connected.
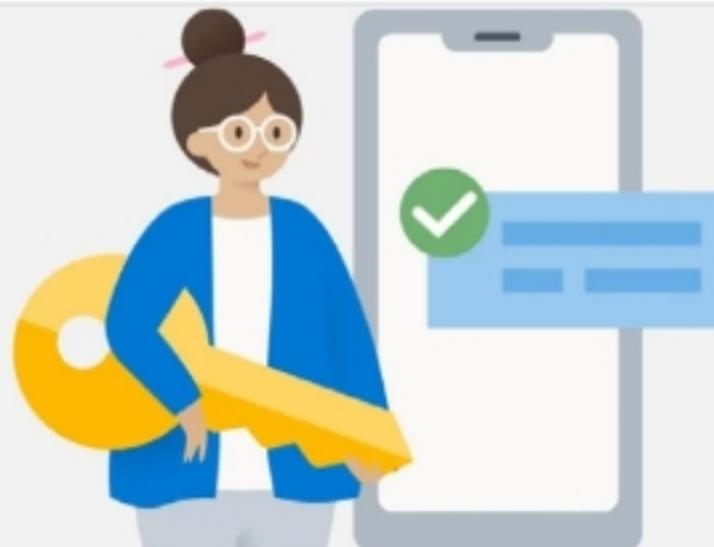

Next, app permissions...

Step 6

Now it's time to start using the Your Mobile app. In the left-hand sidebar are several different sections. These include Photos, Messages, Notifications and Phone Screen. Each part of the app needs to be enabled to begin using it, so you don't have to allow full access if you don't want to.

Connecting to your phone...

Cancel
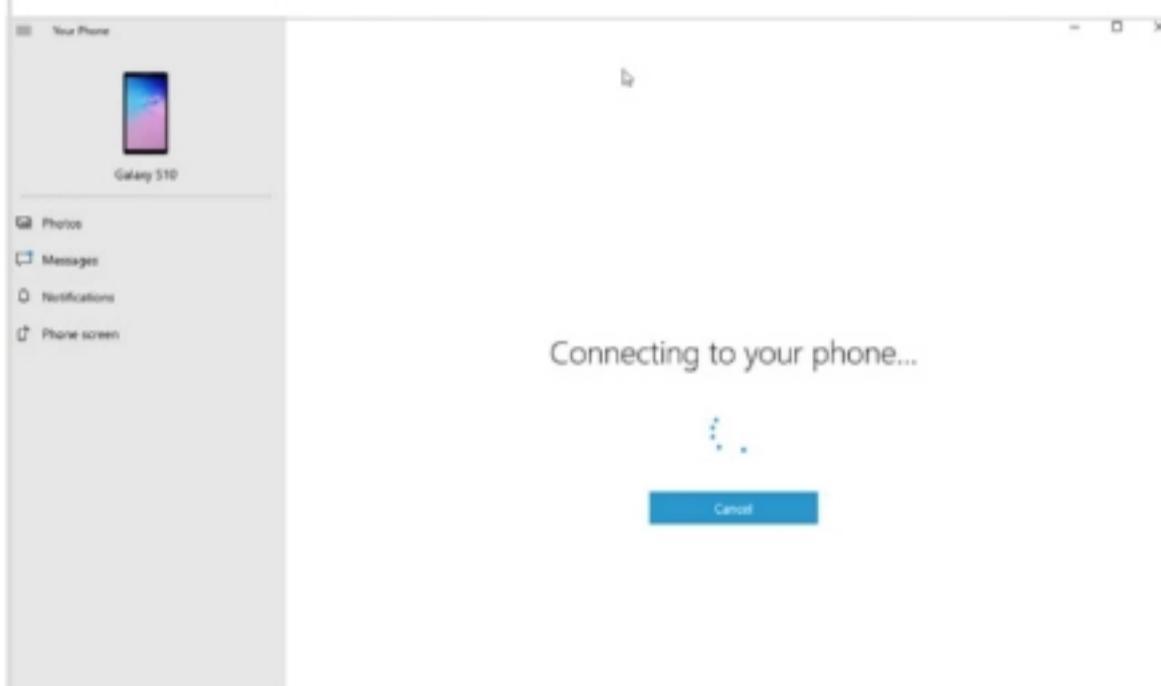
Step 7

Click on Messages first, and then click the "See texts" button. When asked, send the notification to your phone to ask permission to access messages (if already given, this opens the messages list). Your phone messages are now displayed, and you can click on any to read and reply.
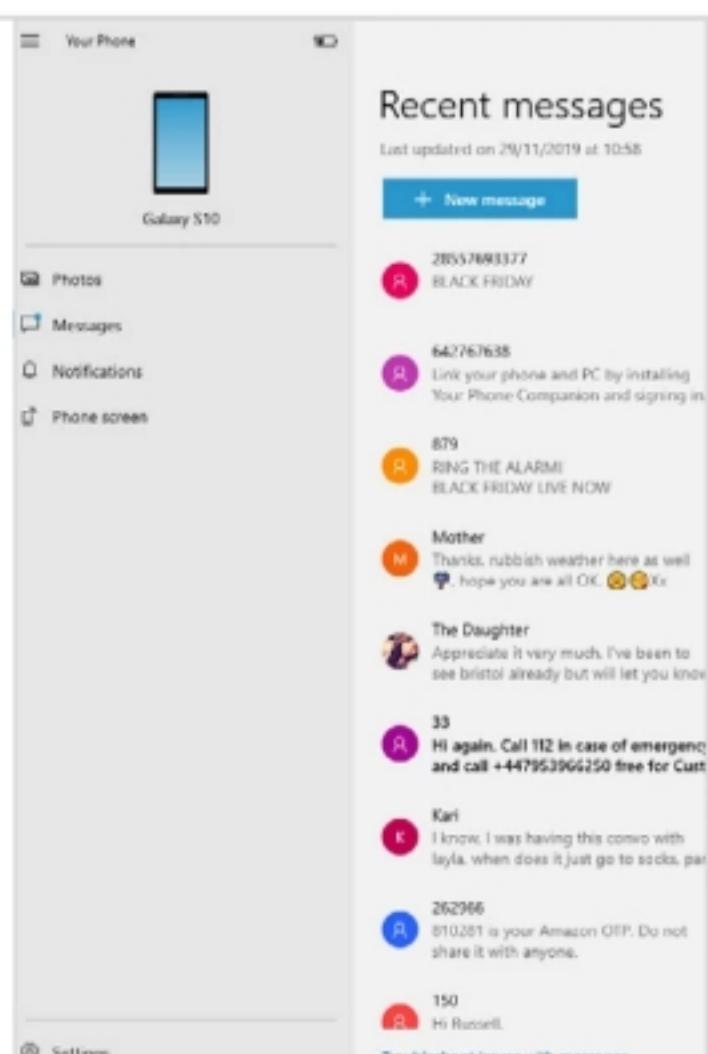

Step 8

If you want to be able to see notifications from your phone on your PC screen, you need to click on Notifications and then click "Get Started". Again, you need to allow this on your phone settings, which are opened by clicking the button on the screen in the Your Phone app.
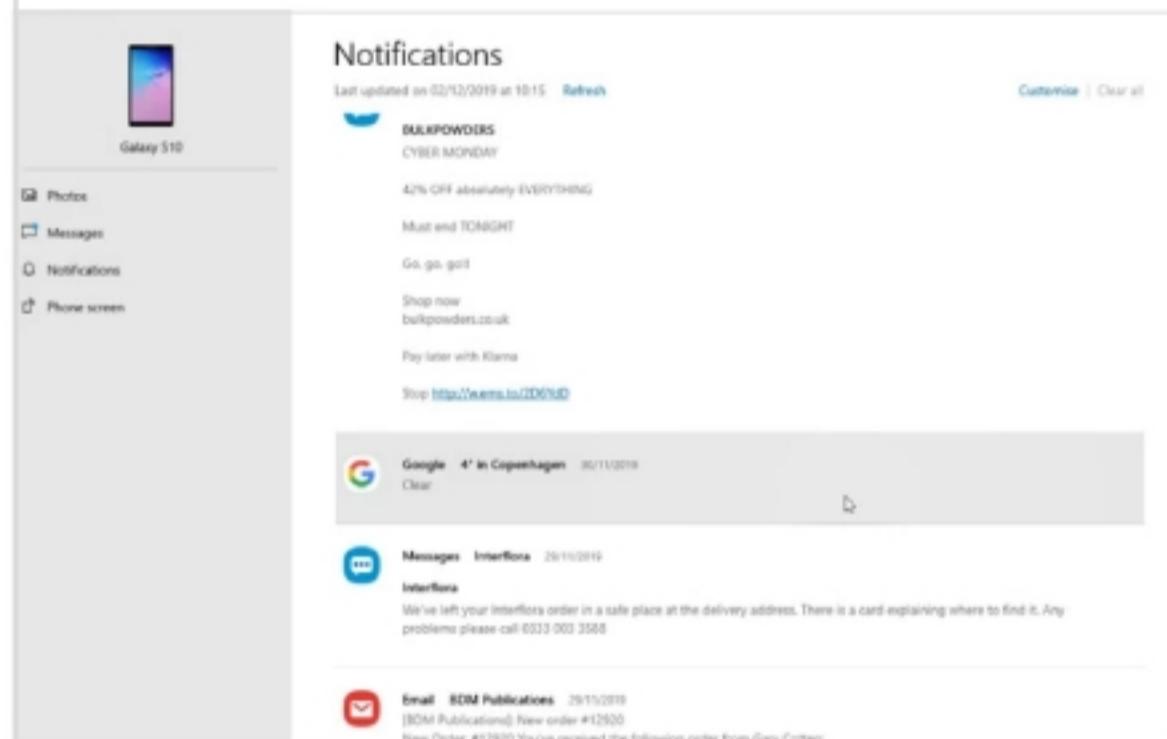
Step 9

To view photos stored on your phone from the comfort of your PC, click the Photos section. Allow access as before, and then wait while the view refreshes. The most recent 25 images captured on your phone are displayed. You can open them in the Photos app by clicking on them.
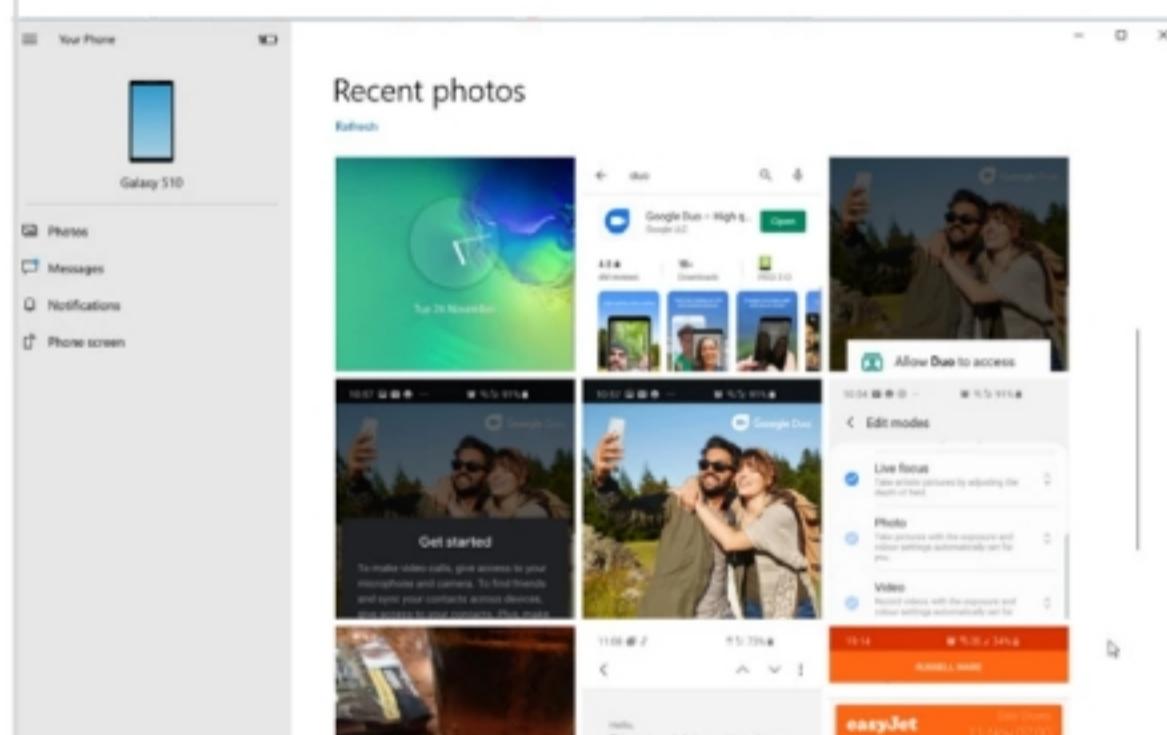
Step 10

The Phone Screen option allows you to mirror your phone screen on your PC, displaying everything that is happening on your mobile device in the live feed of the Your phone app. To fine-tune any settings, click the Settings button at the bottom of the sidebar in the Your Phone app.
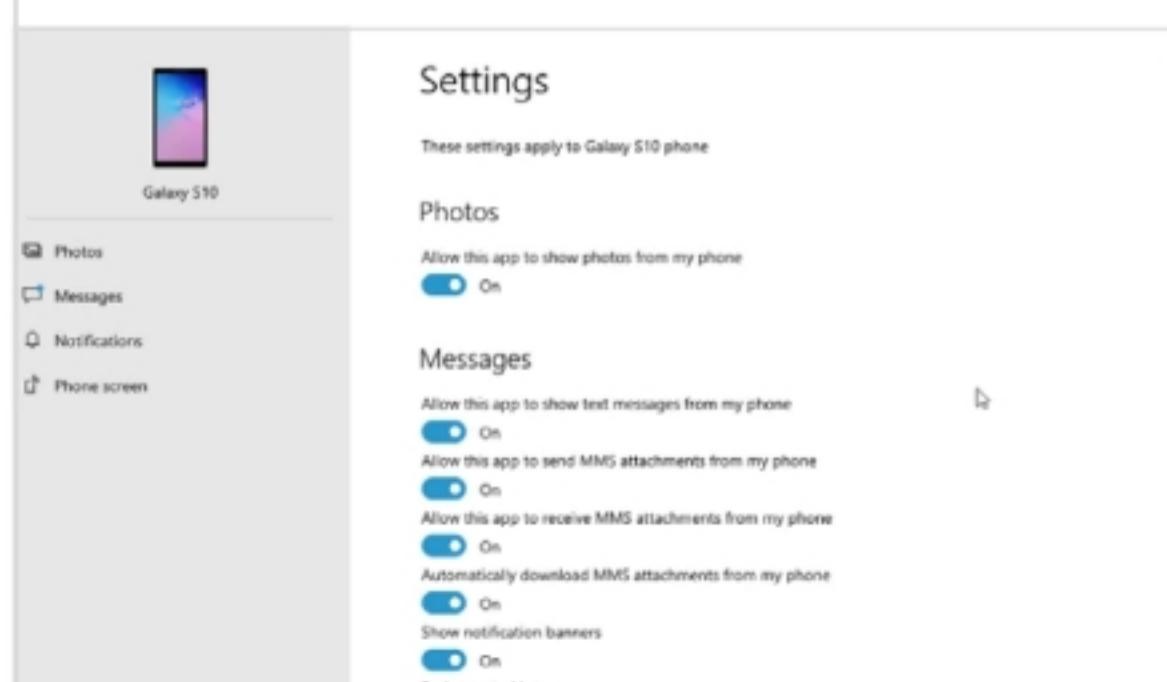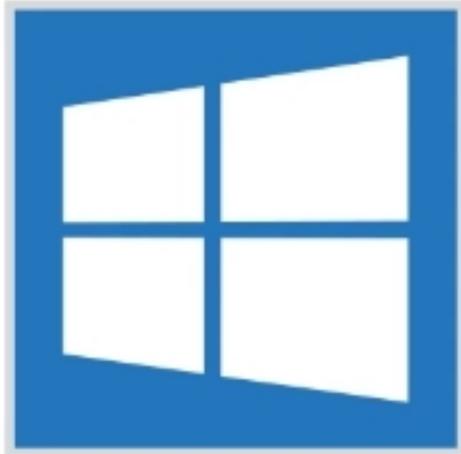
Connect Your Phone to Your PC

You can connect an iOS or Android phone to both your Microsoft account and Windows 10, allowing you to view the photos on your phone from the comfort of your desktop and even view call and SMS details on your computer as they arrive on your phone.

Set Up the Your Phone App

The setup steps for connecting a mobile device to Windows 10 are almost exactly the same for both iOS and Android devices.

Step 1 Open the Settings and look for the "Phone" option. Click the link and then click the "Add a phone" button on the next screen. The Your Phone app then opens in a new window. You can also get to the app directly from the link at the bottom of the apps list in the Start menu.

Step 2 In the right-hand sidebar, click on the type of phone you have (Android or iPhone) and then click "Continue"; another window opens, showing your Microsoft account. To link your phone to your PC, you need to enter your phone number here (if not already in your account).

Step 3 Make sure you use the correct country code (e.g. +44 if in the UK) and then click the "Send" button. Within a few seconds, you should receive an SMS message on your phone from Microsoft. Click on the link in the message and, if asked, allow the Companion app to take photos.
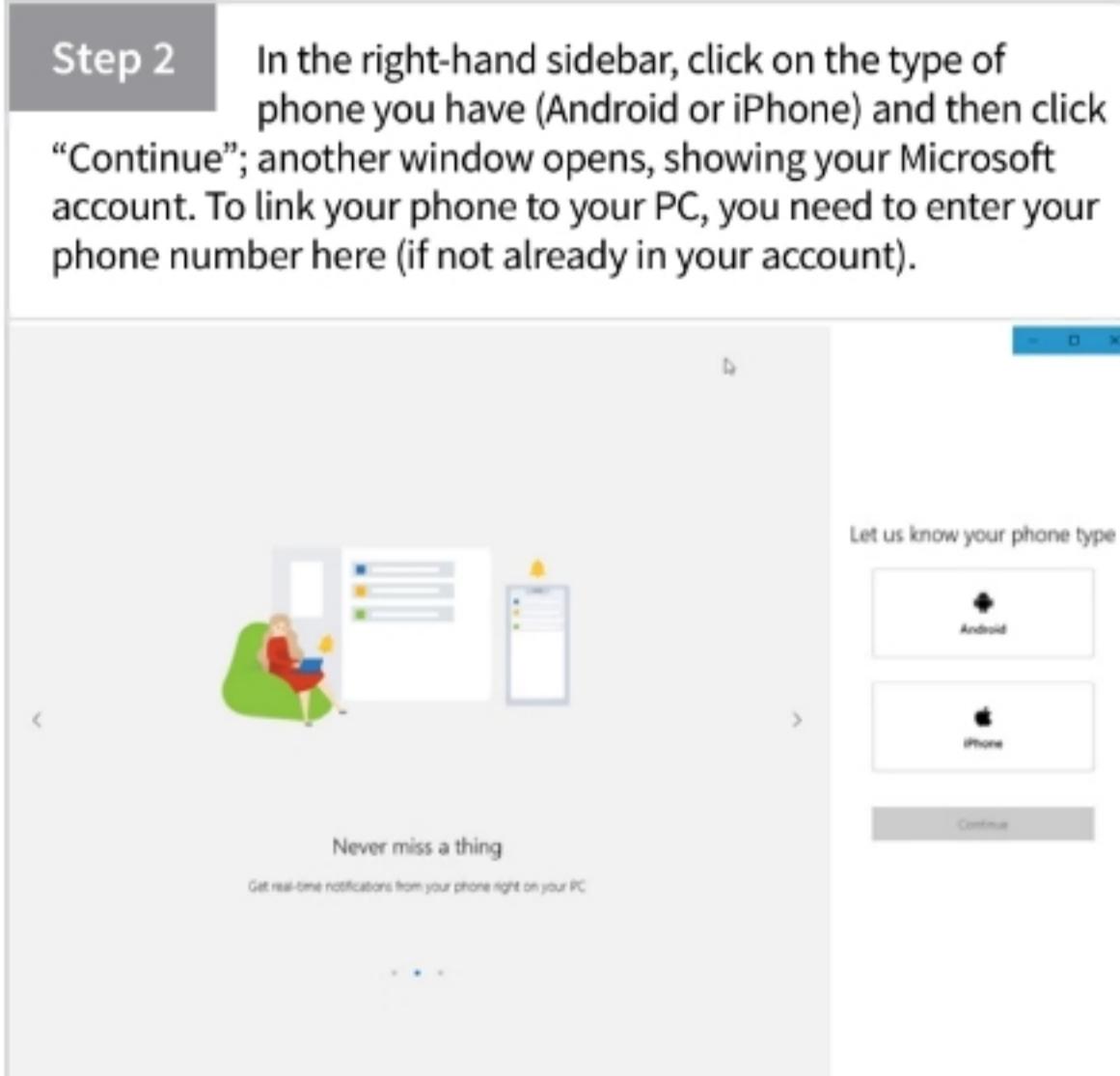
Step 4 Meanwhile, on your computer screen you should see a new window open, showing a QR code. Scan this using the Companion app now open on your phone. Again, you may be asked to allow certain app permissions on your phone. If you decline, you can't connect your devices.
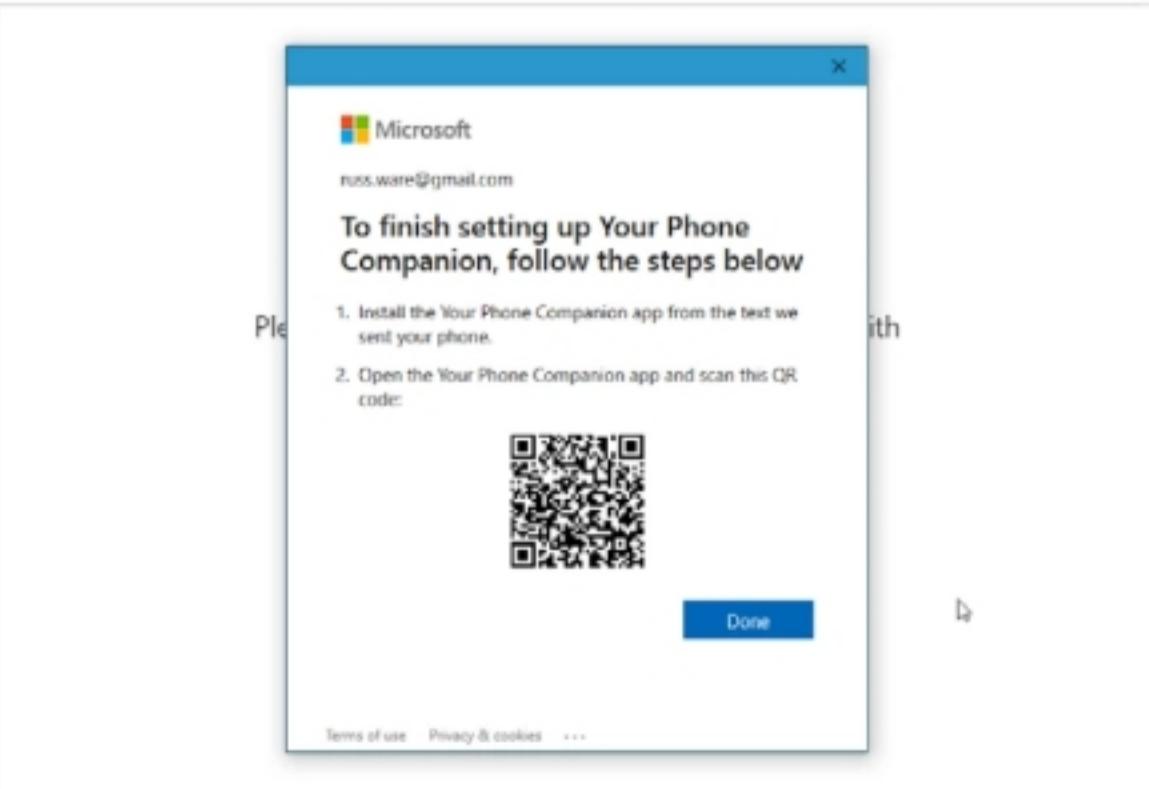
Your Usage

In a move designed to keep up with more mobile-based computing devices like the iPad, Windows 10 now includes a data usage page in Settings too. Here it splits your data between wired and wireless. We'd like to see more advanced settings than this too, so you could see how much data you used on a public wireless hotspot, for example.

Troubleshoot

From the Network and Sharing Center you can also click the Troubleshoot Problems button if you're having issues with connectivity and networking. Another way to troubleshoot problems with a Wi-Fi connection is to right-click the Wi-Fi icon in your Notifications area near the clock. Select Troubleshoot Problems from the menu that appears.

Control Panel

Here we've left the Settings app and we're now in the Network and Sharing Center within Control Panel. The easiest way to get to this is to search for it or go to the Control Panel by right-clicking the Start button and selecting it from the menu. You can also get to it by right-clicking any network icon in the notifications area near the clock.
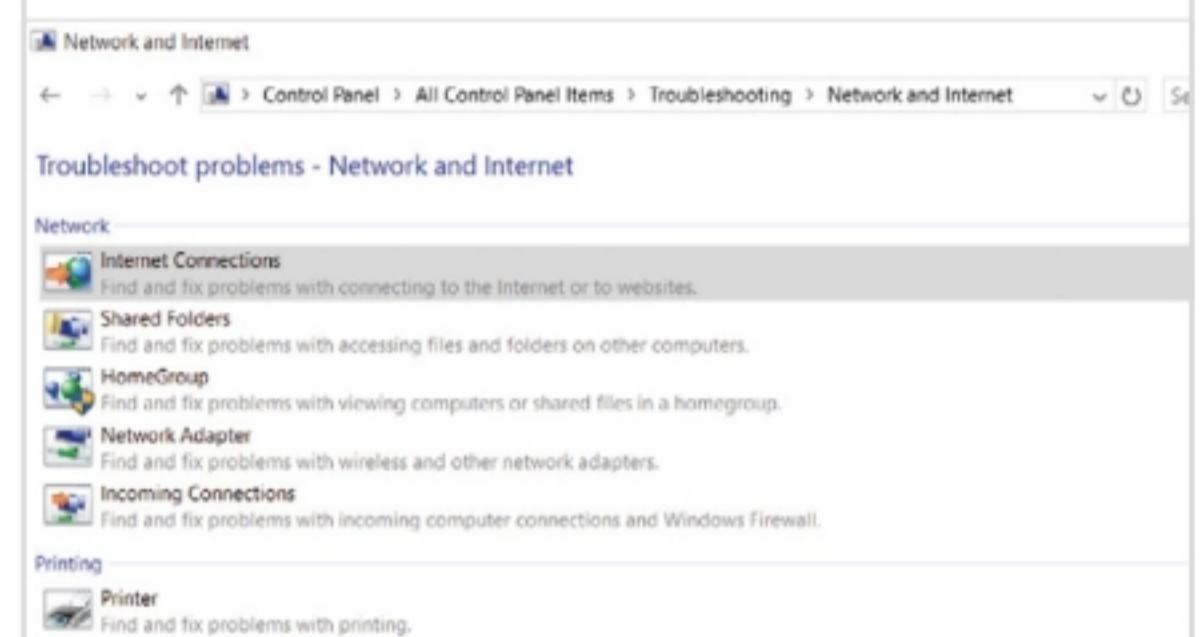
Disable Adapters

Another thing you can do is to disable and re-enable your network adapter (like the Wi-Fi card in your laptop). View your network connections by clicking Change Adapter Settings in the Network and Sharing Center and then right-clicking the network connection in question in the view above. Disable it and then re-enable.

Sharing Settings

From the previous window, select Change Advanced Sharing Settings from the left-hand sidebar. You'll be taken to this screen where you can turn on network discovery; this governs whether your computer can see others on your network and whether you are visible to them. You can also turn file and printer sharing on or off.
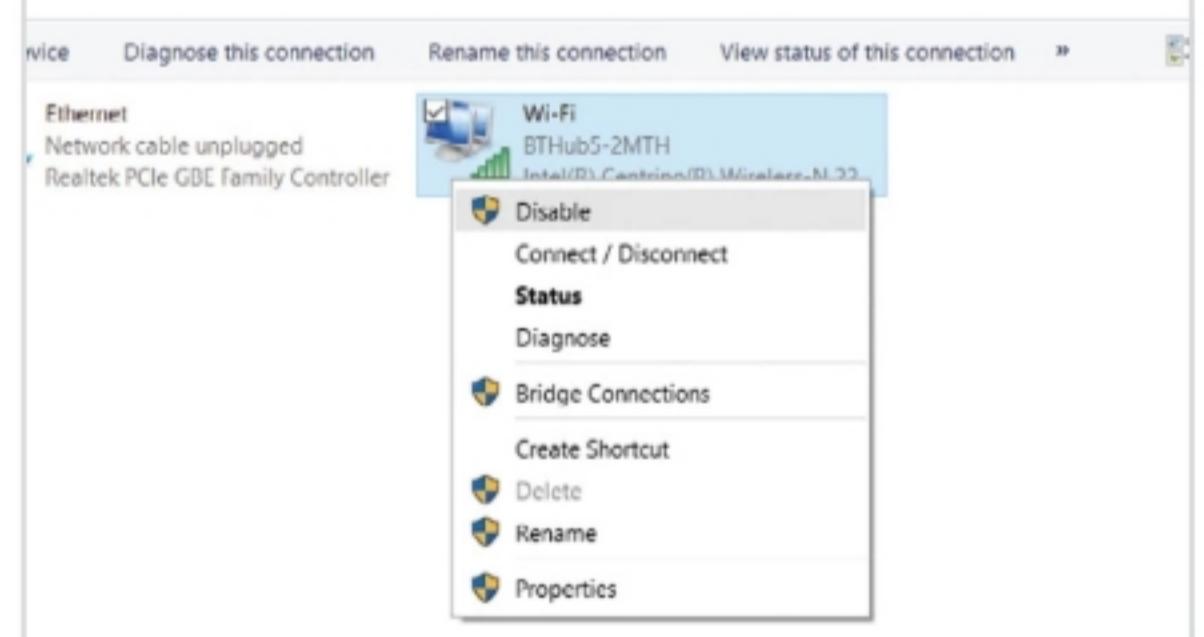
Firewall

Another thing to bear in mind is the Windows Firewall. Normally you won't have any dealings with this whatsoever but if you're having problems accessing the Internet with a particular app, ensure it is listed here. Go to Control Panel > Update and Security > Windows Firewall and then select Allow an App or Feature through Windows Firewall.
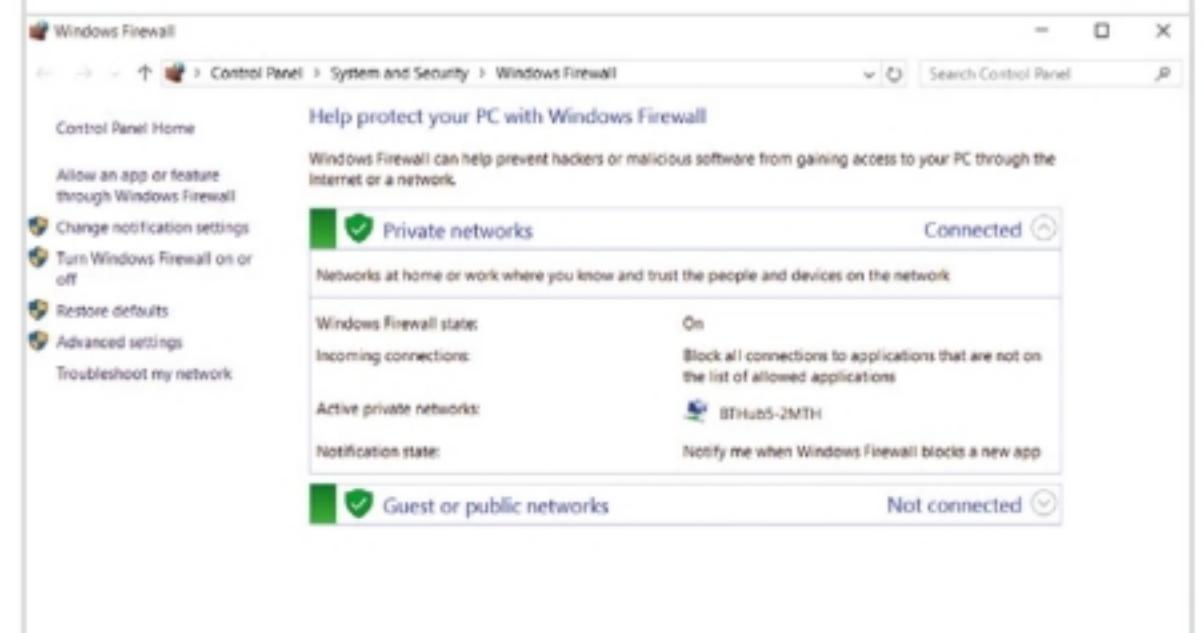
Connecting Your PC to the Internet

Setting up your Internet connection is an important step in Windows 10. Joining and managing networks is easier than ever. One of the new features is Wi-Fi Sense that enables you to securely share network connection details with your contacts.

Manage Your Network Settings

We'll show you how to master your Wi-Fi settings and explain what you need to do if you have a problem connecting to the Internet in Windows 10.

Your Settings
Network and Internet is one of the key sections within the new Windows 10 Settings app. It features a plethora of settings for the different ways to connect to the Internet. While the Wi-Fi screen is fairly straightforward, there are different settings windows for Ethernet connections and even dial-up.

VPN Settings
If you need to log in to a corporate network, this is where you need to enter the appropriate settings. It's fairly easy to do but you'll need the configuration details from your IT helpdesk (they will have to enable you to have VPN access) plus your username and password.

Wi-Fi Sense
We don't mind ourselves but some people are worried about the security implications of sharing network settings; or simply don't want to automatically connect to networks shared by others. You can disable it by visiting the right settings; just click Manage Wi-Fi Settings from the Wi-Fi window. You can also manage your known networks here.

Proxy Settings
If you use a proxy server, this is where you enter any specific settings to do with that. However, Windows 10 should automatically detect proxy settings. Note that the settings you configure here won't apply if you connect via a VPN, because a VPN is essentially a tunnel directly into the corporate network you're connecting to.

Cortana Tips and Tricks

As well as helping you search, both on and off your computer, and letting you create lists and reminders, Cortana has some other clever tricks up its electronic sleeve.

Notification Mirroring
Forward app notifications from your phone to your PC. Download and sign in to Cortana on your Android phone. Then go to Cortana settings on your PC, and switch on Send notifications and information between devices. Messages and alerts you receive on your phone, will now be mirrored on your PC.
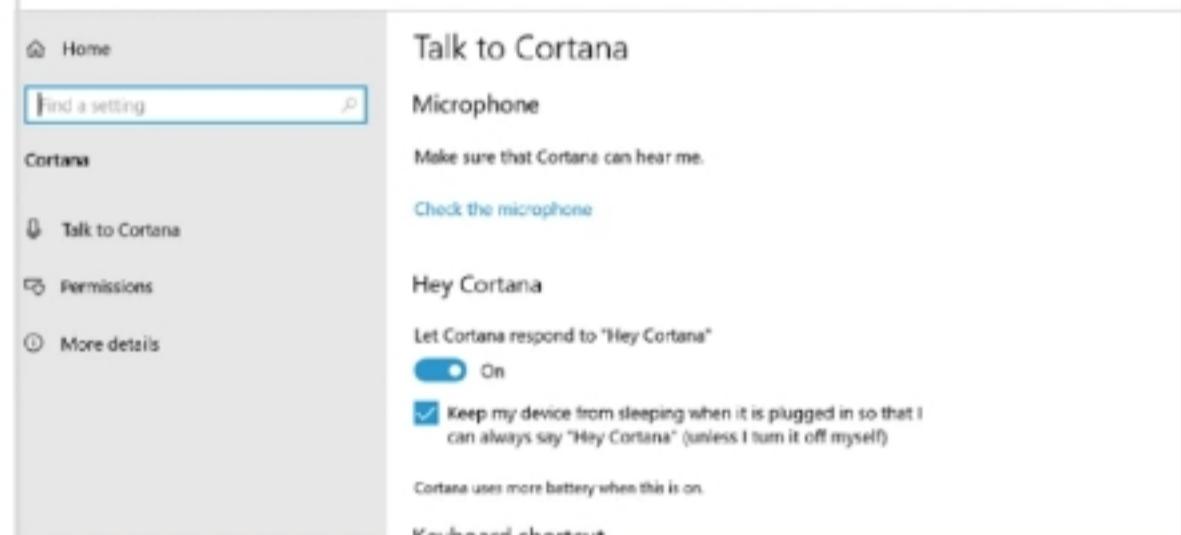
Sticky Note Reminders
Cortana can be instructed to create a reminder from a Sticky Note message. Open Sticky Notes and type, or use the Pen, to write down a reminder like "Call Mum at 4 PM." Select the text that's in a different colour, then select Add Reminder. Select Remind and Cortana will remind you later.
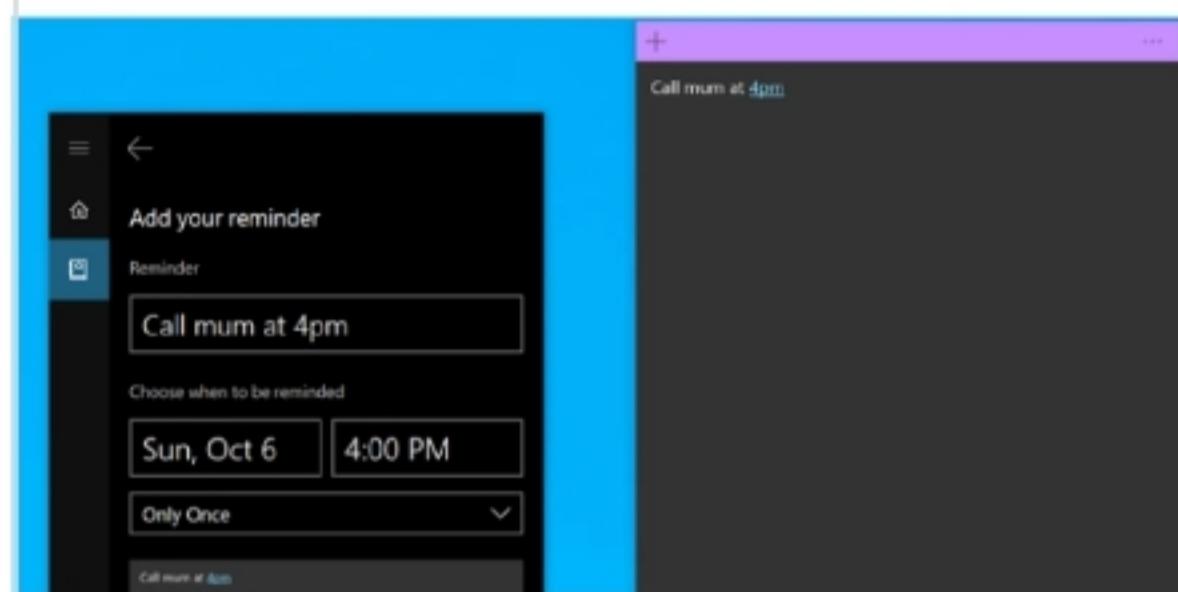
Cortana and Alexa
Connect Cortana and Alexa. Enable the Alexa skill and link it to your Cortana account. Then, just say "Cortana, open Alexa" on your Windows device and talk to Alexa as you normally would. Alexa and Cortana are always getting smarter, so new features like music and audible will be available soon.
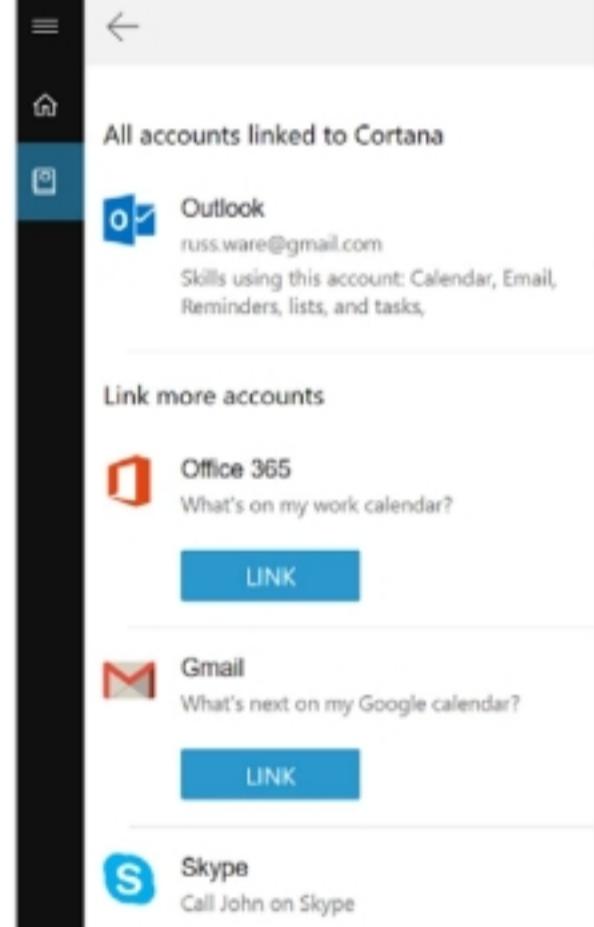
Locked Device
You can use Cortana to search for something, or do something, even when your device is locked. You need to turn on Use Cortana even when my device is locked in Cortana's settings. When your PC is locked, say "Hey Cortana" and ask her something to see this in action.
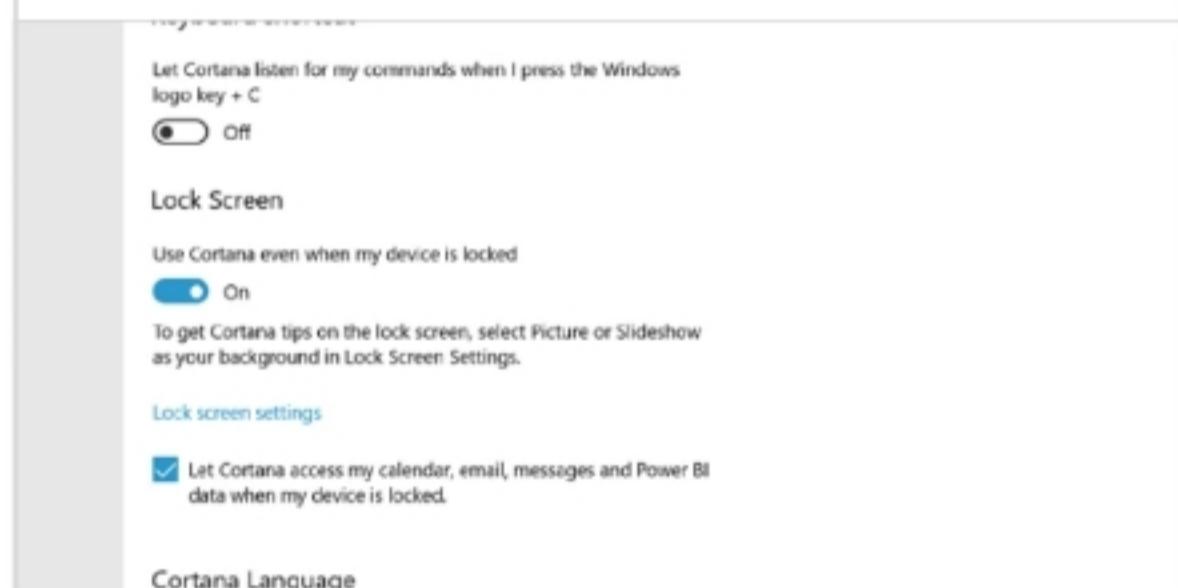
Change Your Name
You can change what Cortana calls you. Select the Search box on the taskbar to open Cortana. Select the Notebook and then select your hyperlinked email address. Select Change my name, enter the name you want Cortana to call you, and then select Enter.
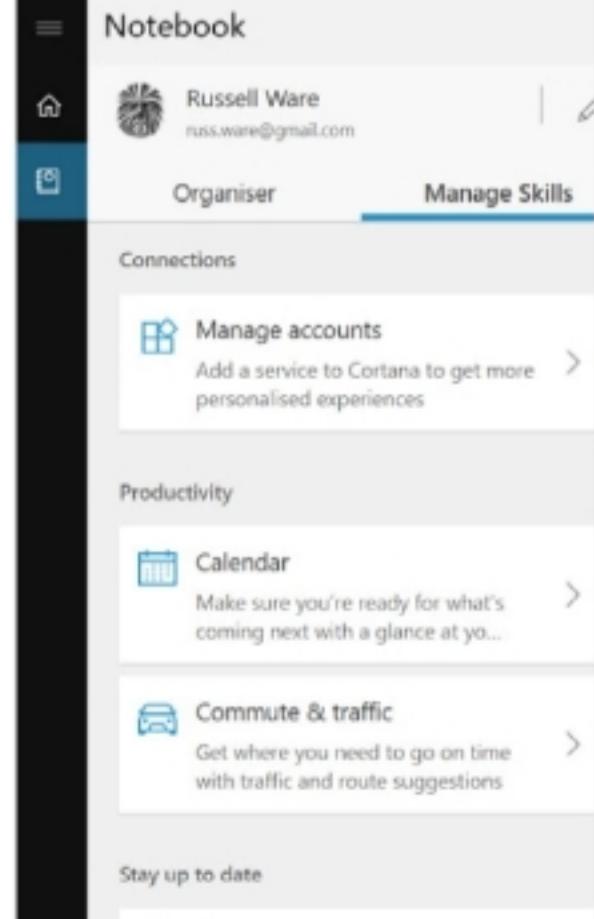
Track Packages
You can have Cortana track your packages. Open Cortana and select the Notebook icon and then Skills. Connect Cortana to Outlook (or other email provider) and then go to Permissions in the Cortana Settings and switch on Communications history. This allows Cortana to recognise package confirmation emails from most major carriers.
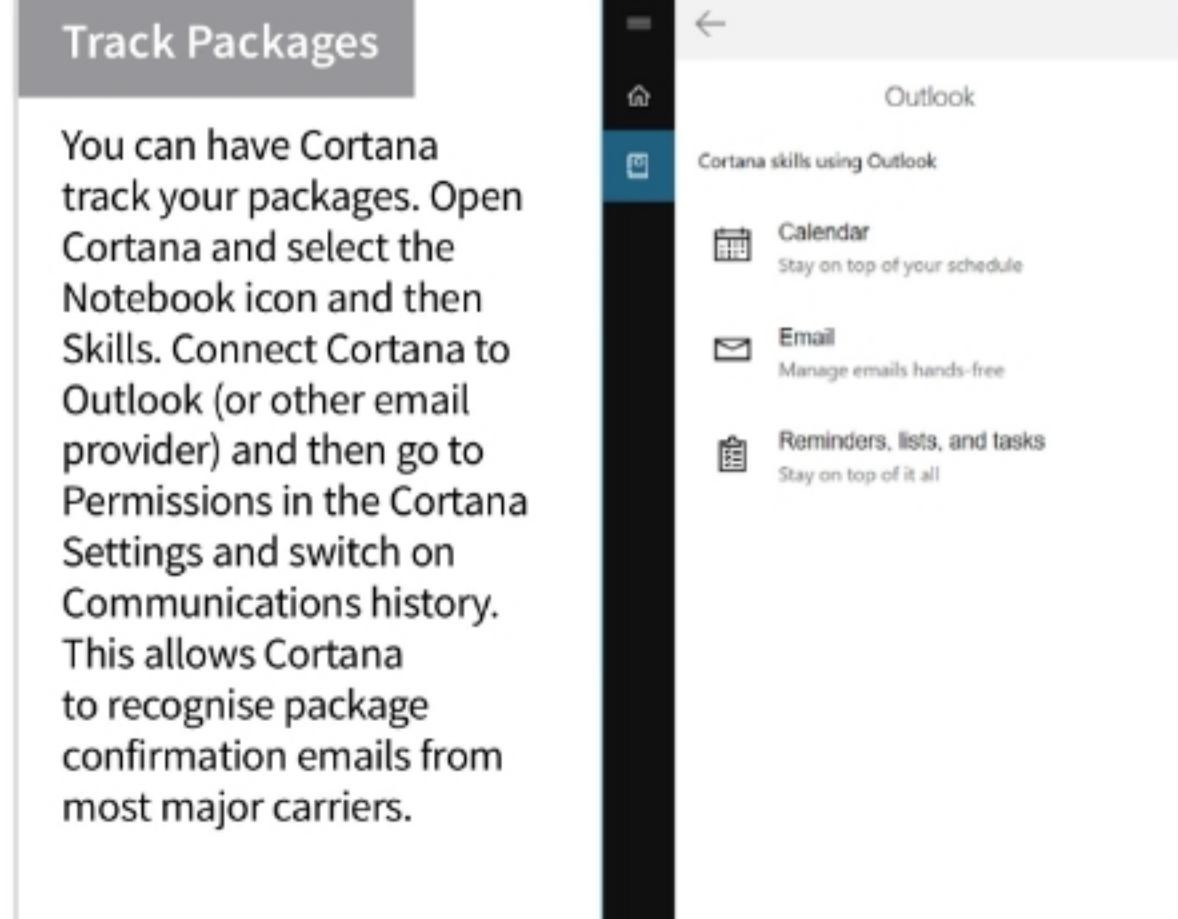
Step 5 Back in the Organiser panel, click the Reminders option to view and add reminders. With the reminders panel open, click the + button at the bottom to begin a new reminder. Type a name for the reminder, and then use the buttons below the name to set a time, place or person, or to add a photo.
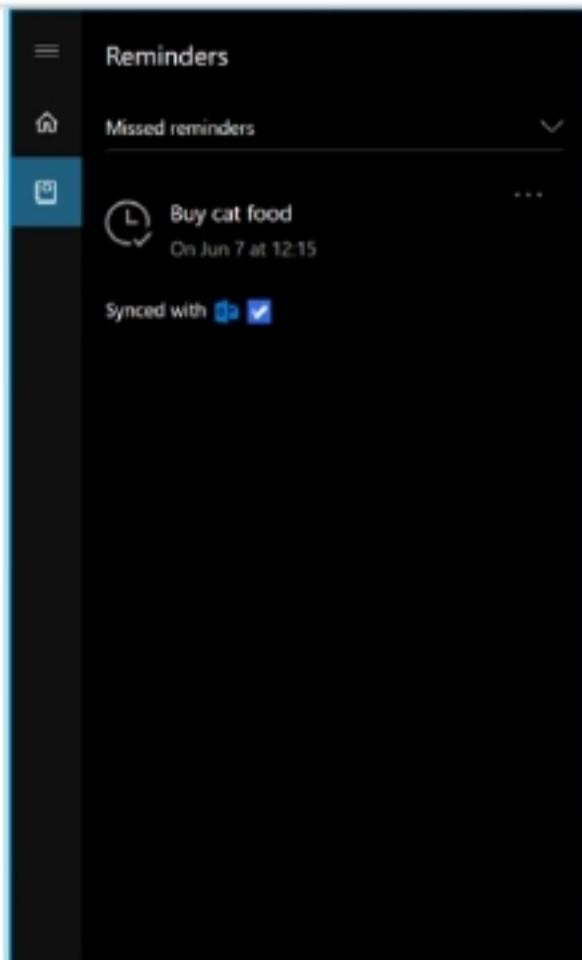
Step 6 Once reminders are set in Cortana, they will appear as a pop up and, at the allotted time, as an Action Center alert. You can then snooze, or set the reminder as complete, just as you can for any alert that appears in the Action Center. A list of previous reminders remains in the Cortana Reminders panel.
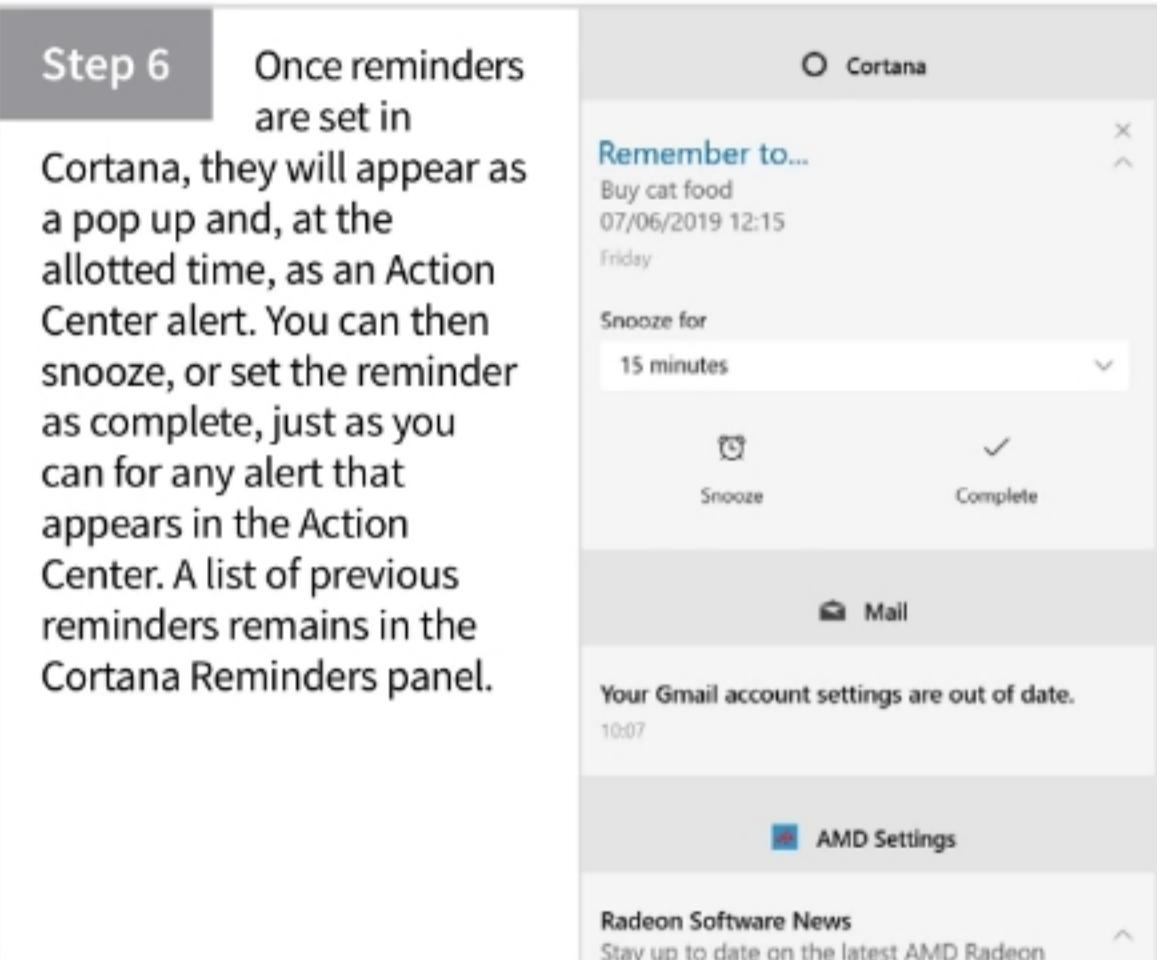
Cortana Skills

Cortana Skills are the various things you can allow Cortana to do, such as connecting it to a Gmail account or allowing it access to your music library.

Manage Skills

You can manage your Skills by opening the Cortana panel and clicking on the Notebook. Select the "Manage Skills" tab, and then scroll down to see the skill category you want to manage. The exact skills you'll see here will vary, depending on the apps and features you have in Windows 10.
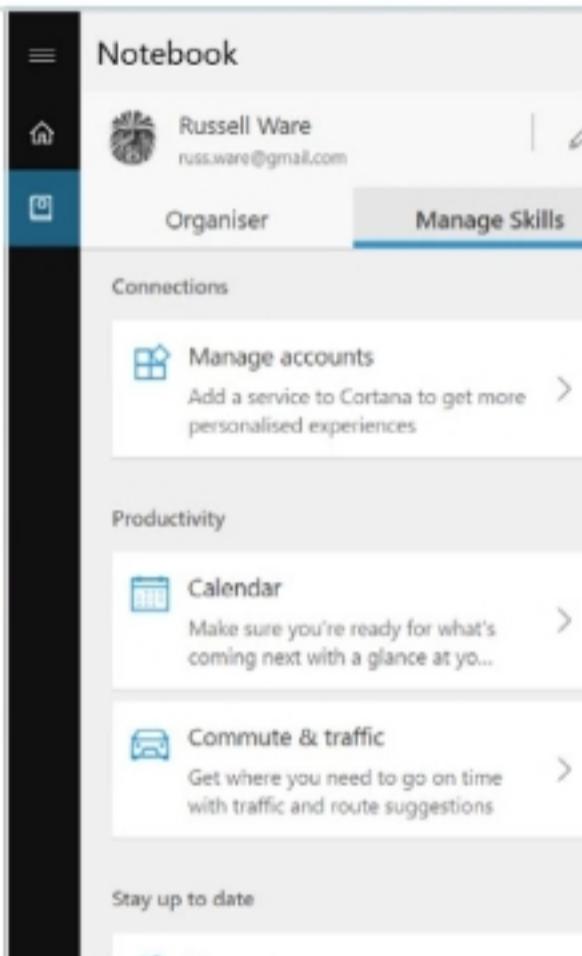
Calendars & Reminders

You can choose whether Cortana can access and display your upcoming meetings, your upcoming reminders, and your calendar timeline. You can switch each of these options on and off independently. For this to work, you will need to be using the Windows 10 Calendar app, not a third-party app.
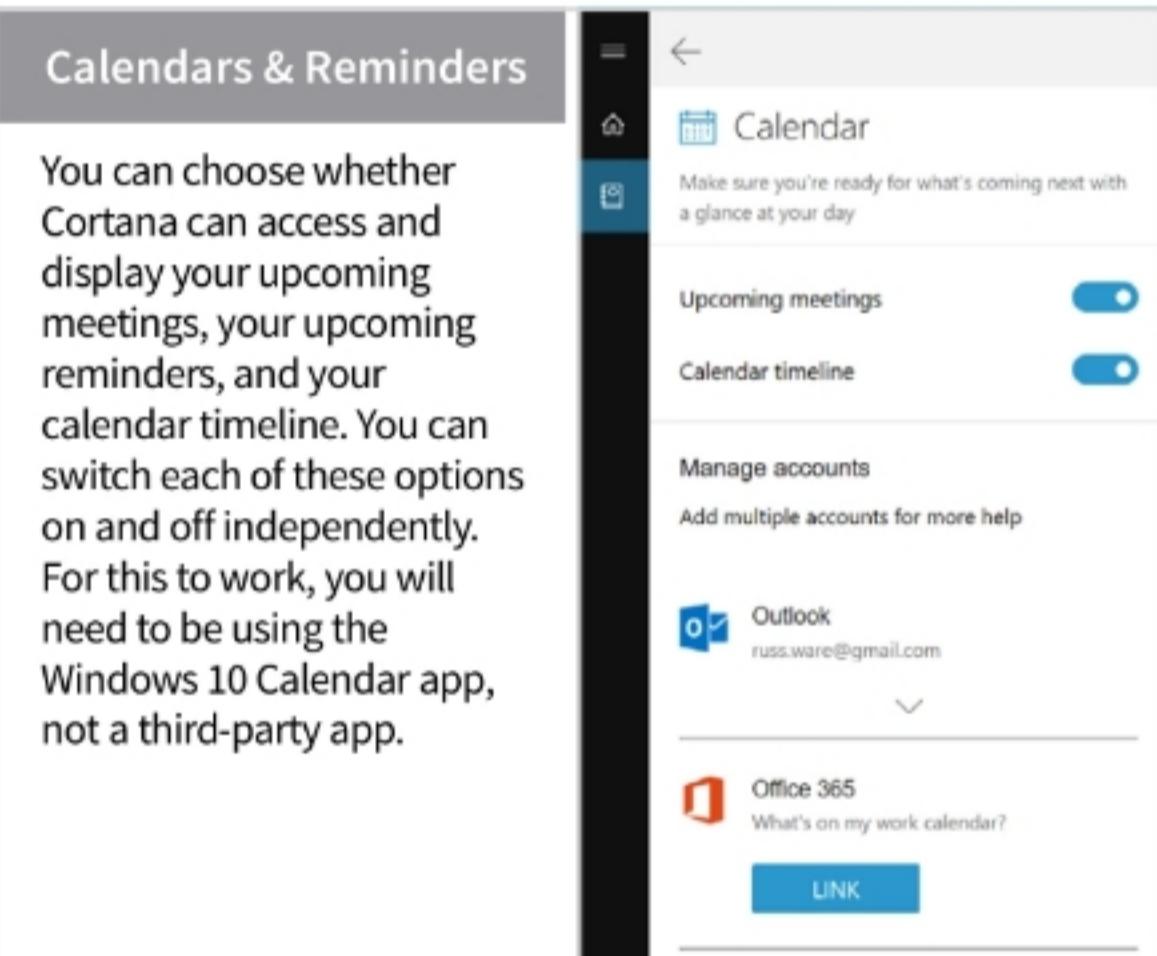
Connected Services

This skill allows you to connect app services like Gmail, or Wunderlist, to Cortana. Select the option you want to connect, then click the Connect button. Normally, you will then need to sign in to the account associated with that app or service (your Gmail account login, for example).
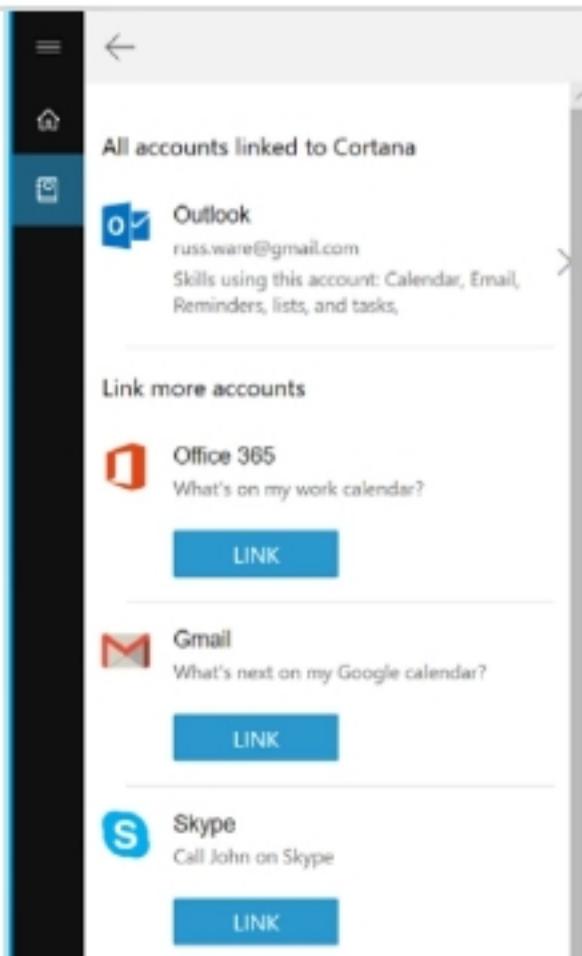
Commute & Traffic

This skill can be set to work with driving times, or public transport times, and will alert you to traffic congestion and delays on your way to or from work (or to and from any other of "your places"), and can even tell you when you need to leave in order to arrive at a meeting, or appointment, on time.
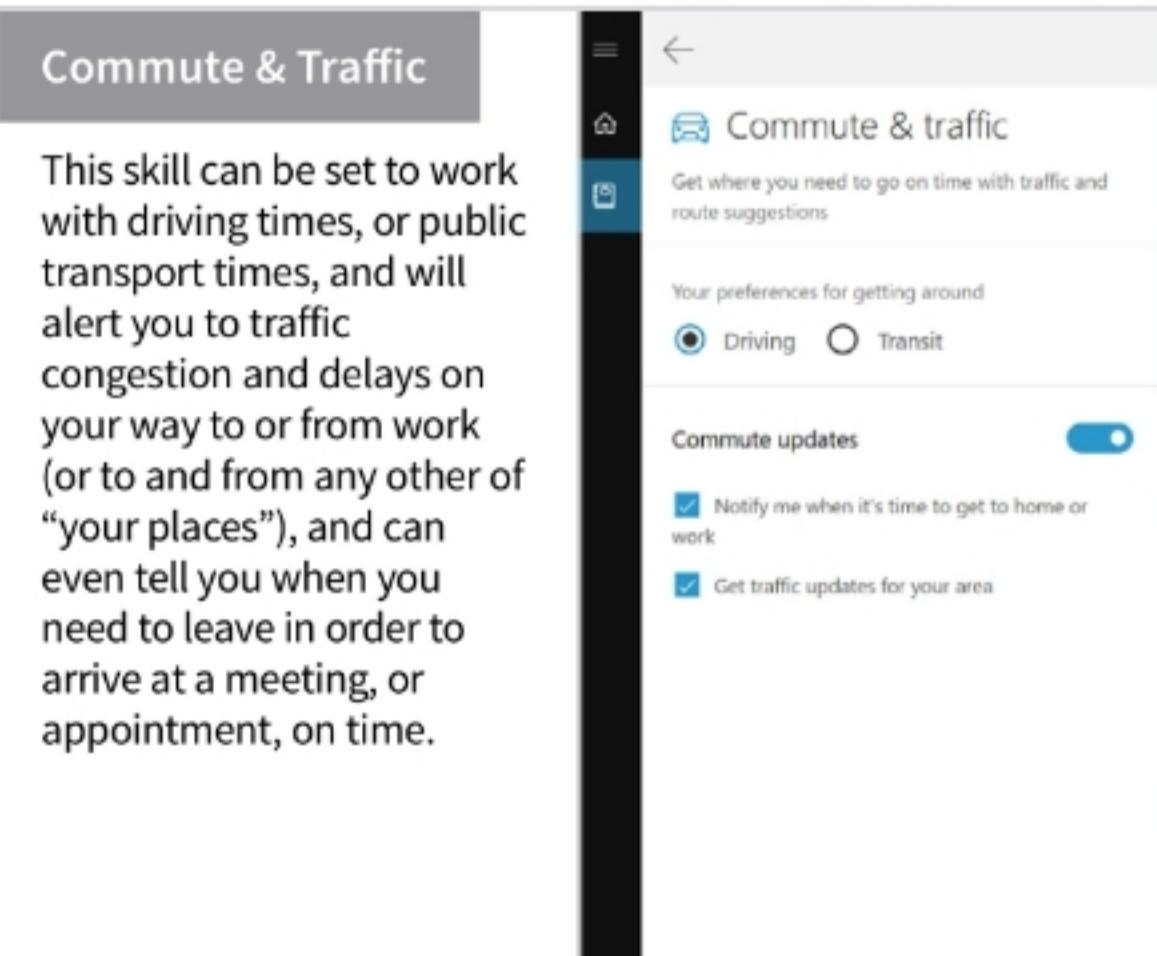
Doing More with Cortana

Cortana is your personal digital assistant in Windows. The more you use Cortana, the better your experience will be. So if you haven't used it much yet, or are feeling slightly underwhelmed, this guide will show you just how powerful a tool it can be.

The Cortana Notebook

The Notebook in Cortana is your way of making the feature more helpful when using it every day with your PC and Windows 10. The Notebook contains the Organiser and Cortana Skills.

Step 1 You can view your Notebook by clicking in the search field in the taskbar, and then clicking the Notebook icon in the left sidebar. You will see your name, plus the email address associated with your Microsoft account, at the top. And below that, two more tabs, for Organiser and Manage Skills.

Step 2 To edit some of the information about yourself, click the Edit icon (the pencil) next to your name. Click "Add a place" to search for, and then add, important locations to Cortana. These could be your home address, your work address, or the location of your favourite cafe.

Step 3 With the Organiser tab selected, you will see your lists and reminders. If you have not created any, you will see the options to create both. Click the Lists option and you can choose to create a shopping list, a to-do list, or any other type of list. Also here are some pre-made lists, but they can be altered.
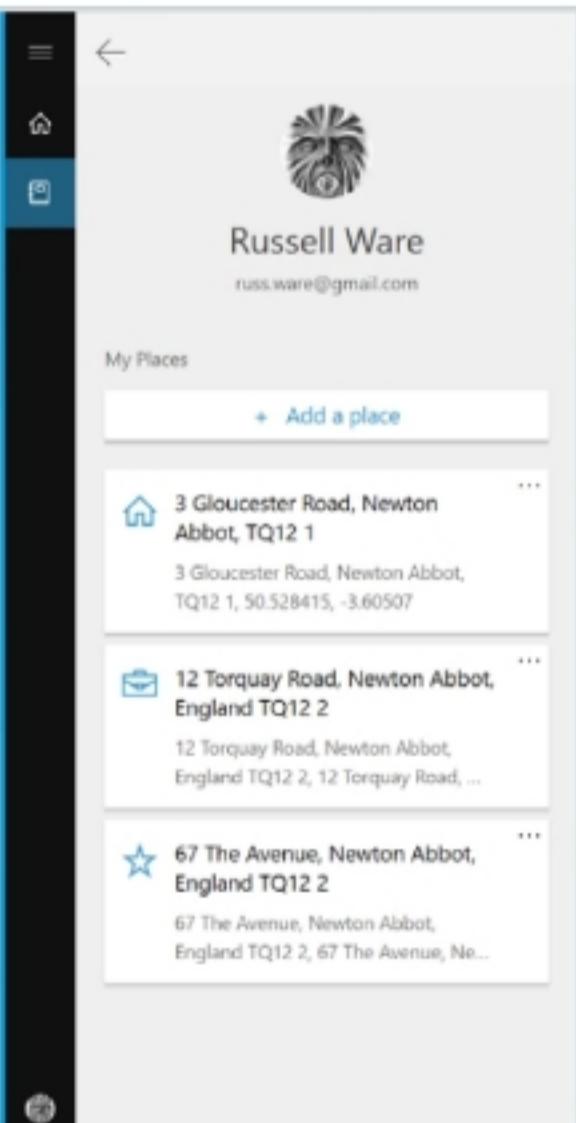
Step 4 When you open a list, you will see suggestions for things to add. Click these to add them, along with a check box. If you want to add custom items to the list, just type what you want in the text field at the top and click the + button. Click the Menu button at the top of the list to delete all items from it.
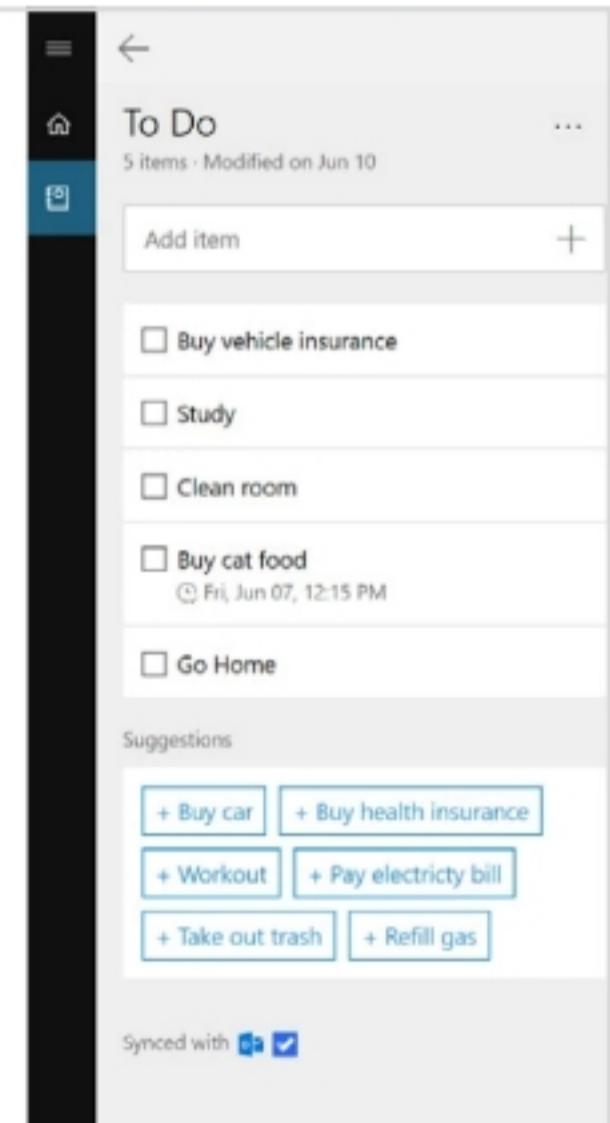
Advanced Search Settings

Head into the main settings app and click on the Search section. Here you can find search settings under two categories: Permissions and History, and Searching Windows.

Enhanced Search

The default file search setting is Classic, which just returns results from your libraries and from your desktop folder. You can change this to Enhanced search, which will re-index your files and provide a much wider set of search result in the search panel. Libraries and desktop are still included.

Manage Search History

Windows 10 can collect search history from one or more devices, to provide a much more personalised search experience. If you prefer, you can disable search history, either on a single device or across all of your connected Windows 10 devices. You can also clear existing search history.
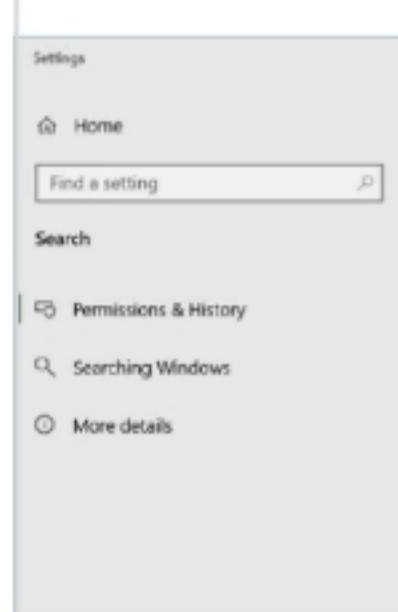
Excluding Folders

You can choose enhanced search and then exclude folders from the search index. This means that those folders and their contents won't appear in search results. There are already several folders excluded, including important system folders and things like AppData.


Troubleshoot Search

If you having problems with search (files not appearing in results as expected, for example), you can run the indexing troubleshooter. Open Settings > Search > Searching Windows and scroll to the bottom. Run the troubleshooter, and then select the problem you are having.
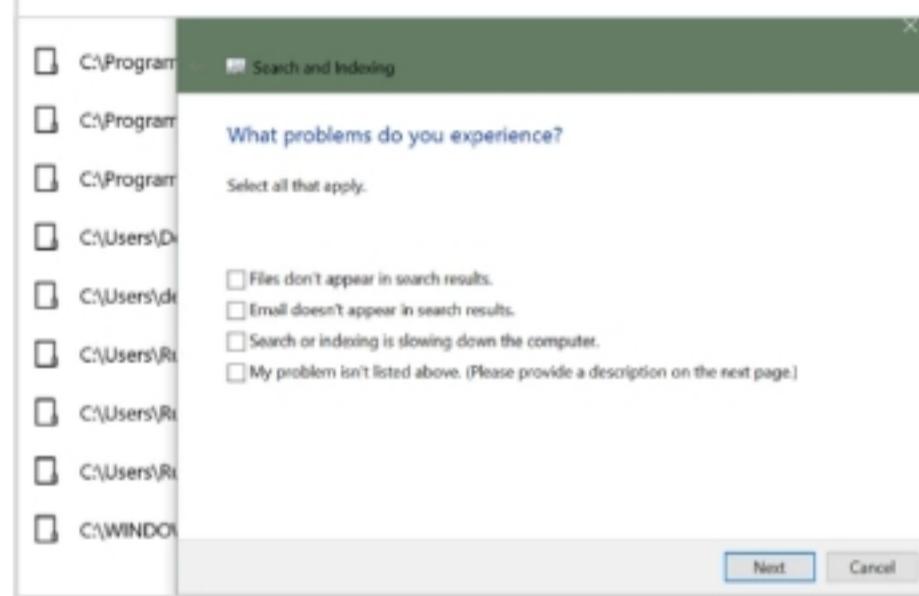
Advanced Index Settings

You can further tweak the areas of your computer that are indexed by the search by clicking on Searching Windows > Advanced Search Indexer Settings. Here you can choose to index encrypted files, rebuild the search index, and even change the search index location.

Taskbar Display

Windows 10 now separates the search field from the Cortana button. You can further customise how search is displayed in the taskbar if you wish. Right-click on the taskbar and highlight "Search" from the action menu. You can choose Hide, Show Search Icon or Show Search Box.

Step 5   When web results are shown in the search panel, you can scroll the list to see more (assuming there are more than a few results) just like when viewing search results in Bing or Google. You can further refine search results shown, by using the web, images and videos tabs at the top.
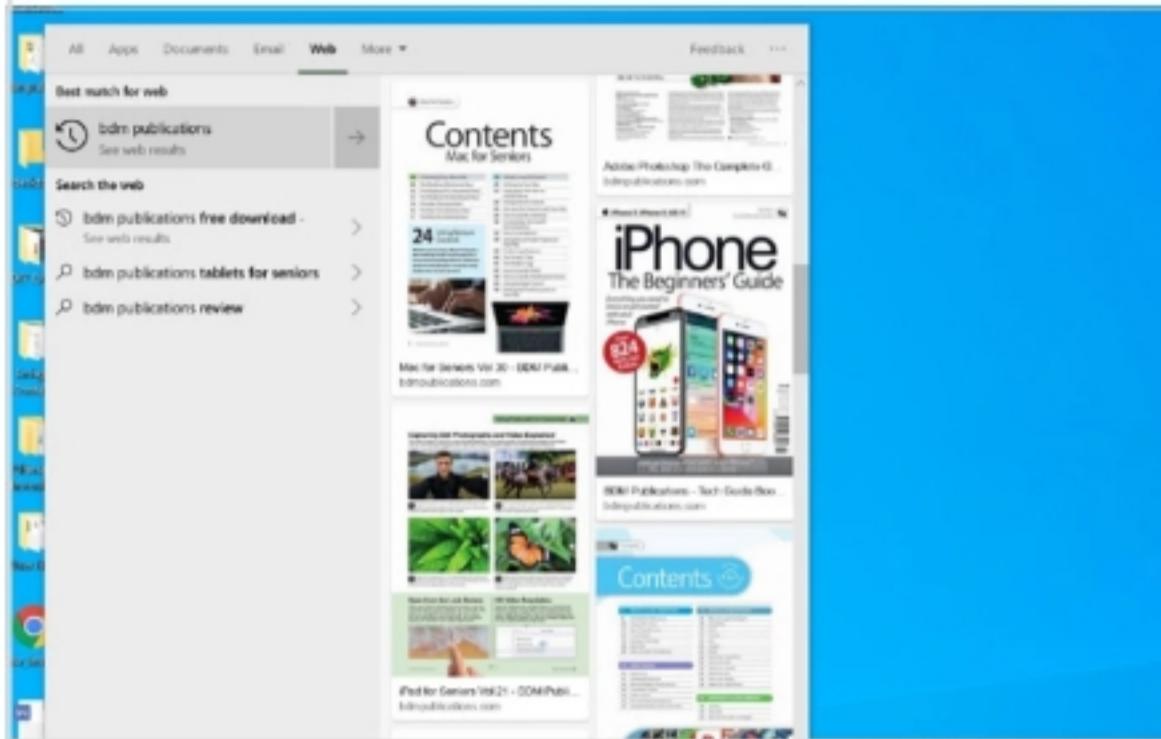
Step 6   For things like documents and photos on your computer, the right panel will display information about the file (when it was created and where it is stored), as well as links to Open, Open File Location and Copy Full Path to the file. Apps found in the store have an Install link.
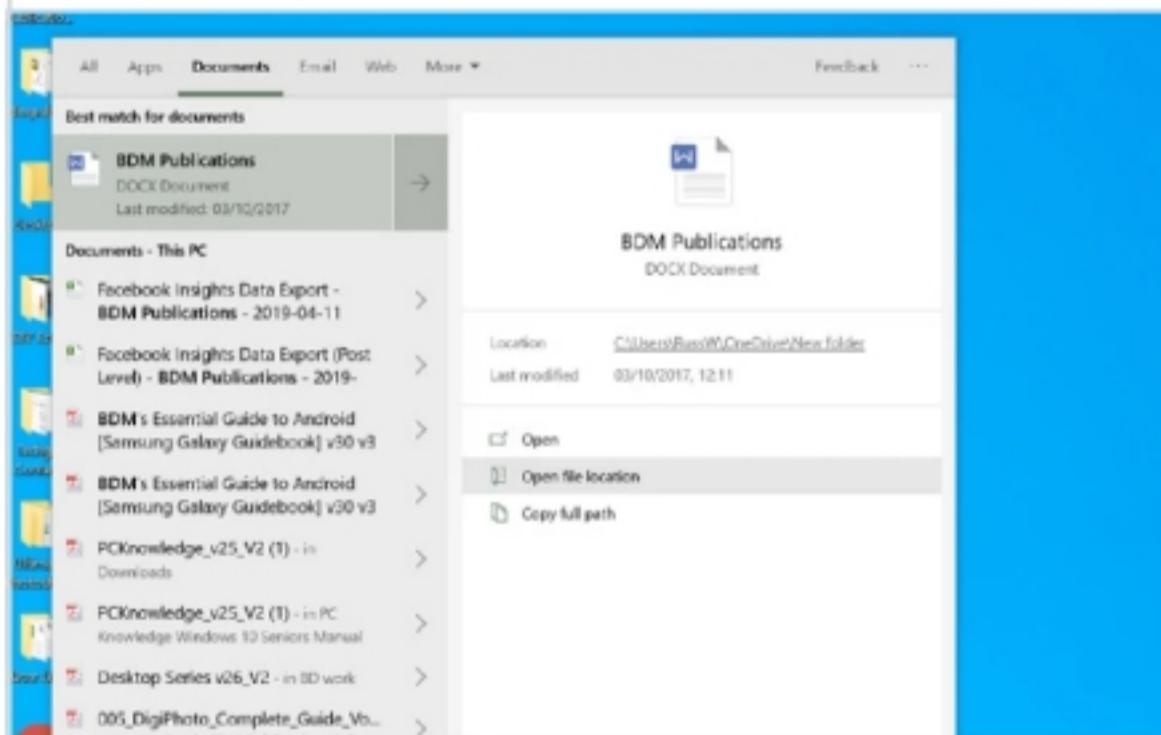
Step 7   The search panel also includes a set of links to your most used apps or software. These are displayed along the top of the panel when it first opens, but are replaced by search results as you begin to type. Clicking on any of these app links will open the app directly from the panel.
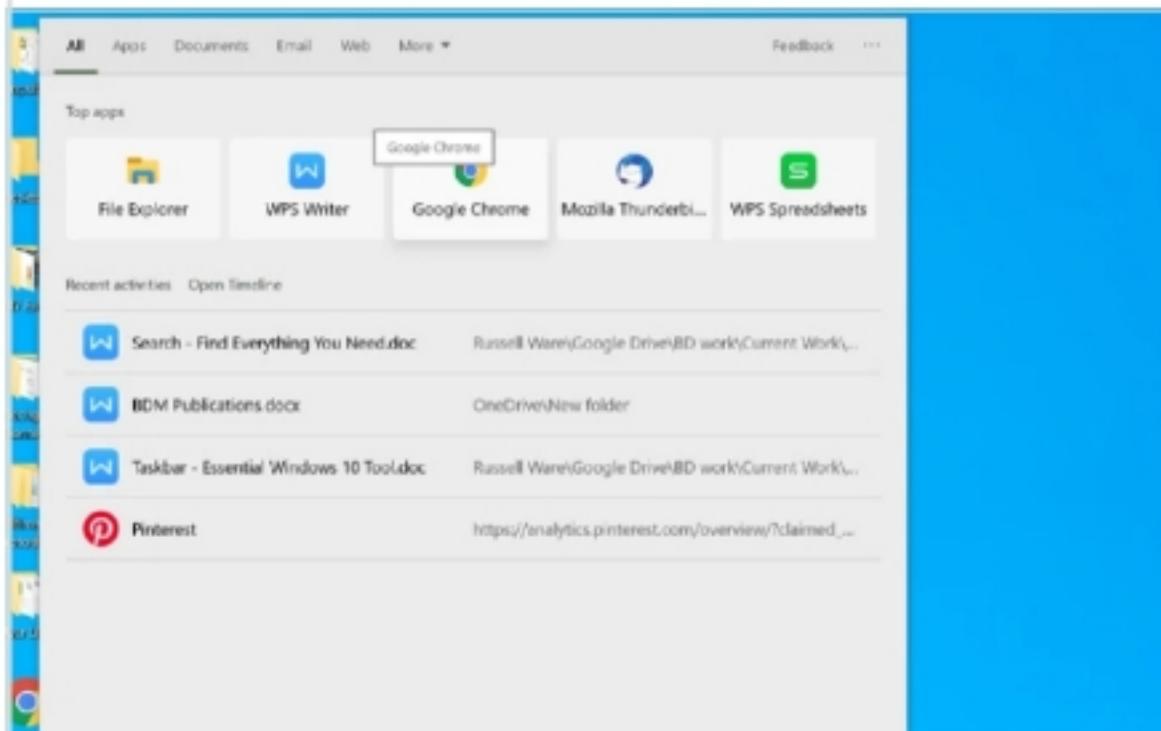
Step 8   Search is linked to Timeline, so the search panel also shows recent activities when first opened. These include documents you have recently edited, web sites and pages you have visited and app/games you have had running. Click the "Open Timeline" link to do just that.
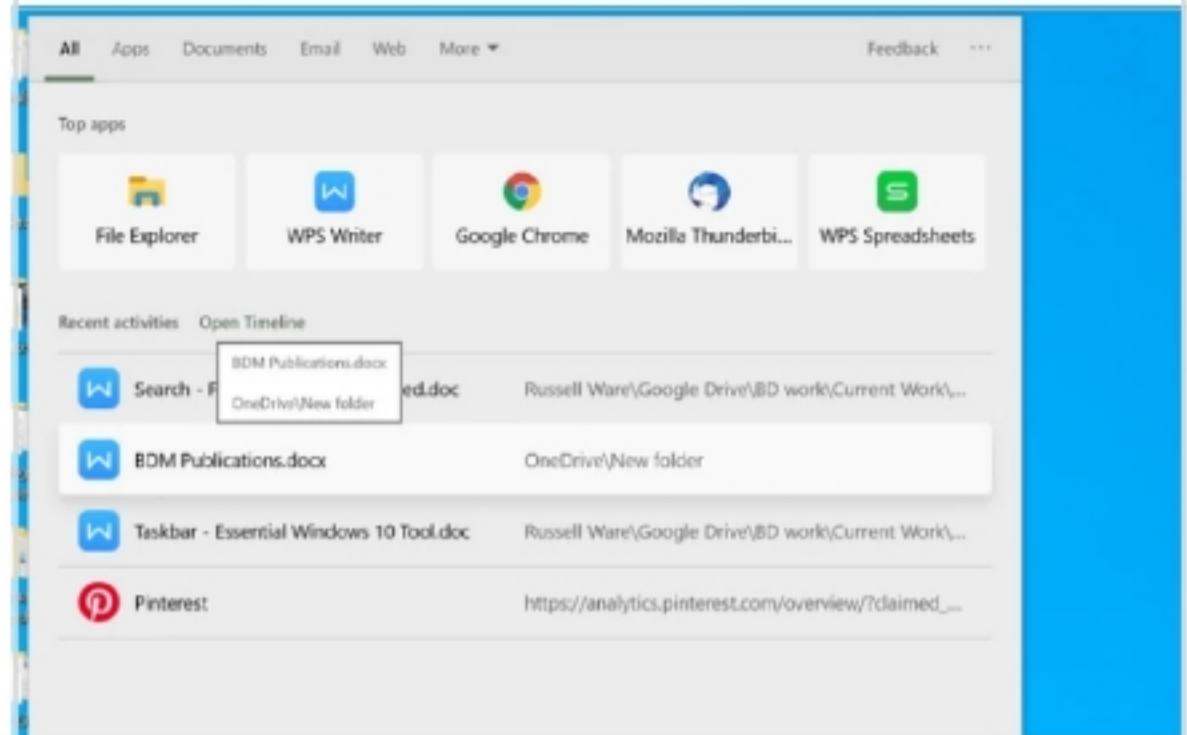
**Step 9**   You can access search settings from the Menu button at the top right of the search panel. This will also tell you which account is currently in use and connected to search. Click the link to manage accounts, including which email account will be searched here.
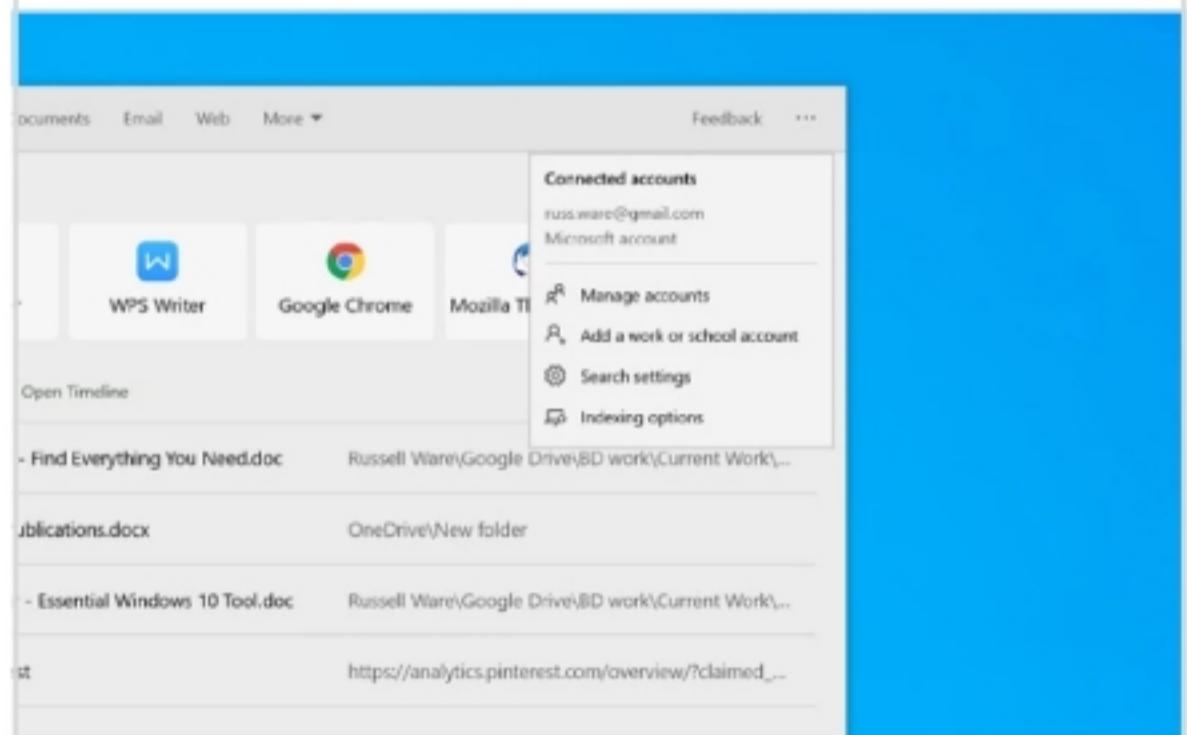
Step 10   Click on Search Settings to open the main settings app to the relevant section. Here you can control Safe Search settings, cloud search content, and your search history. You can also control what is searched (all files, or just libraries and desktop) and choose to exclude folders from search.
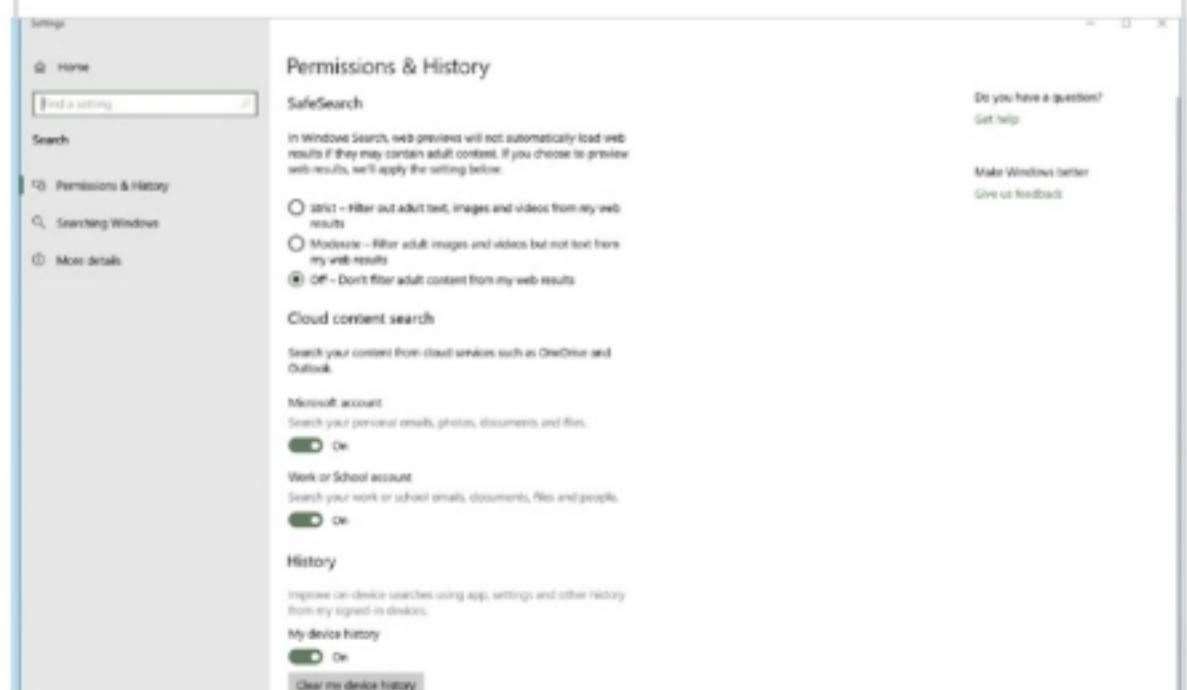
Using the Windows 10 Search Tools

Search and Cortana are no longer combined into one tool in Windows 10. Search now has some additional tools and settings which help you find things both on and off your computer. Added extras to search include recent activities and most used app links.

Step 1 Click in the search field at the left of the taskbar and the new search panel will pop up on screen. You can now simply start typing your search term and watch as the results are listed in the panel. The results will be split into sections such as Documents, Apps, Photos and Web.
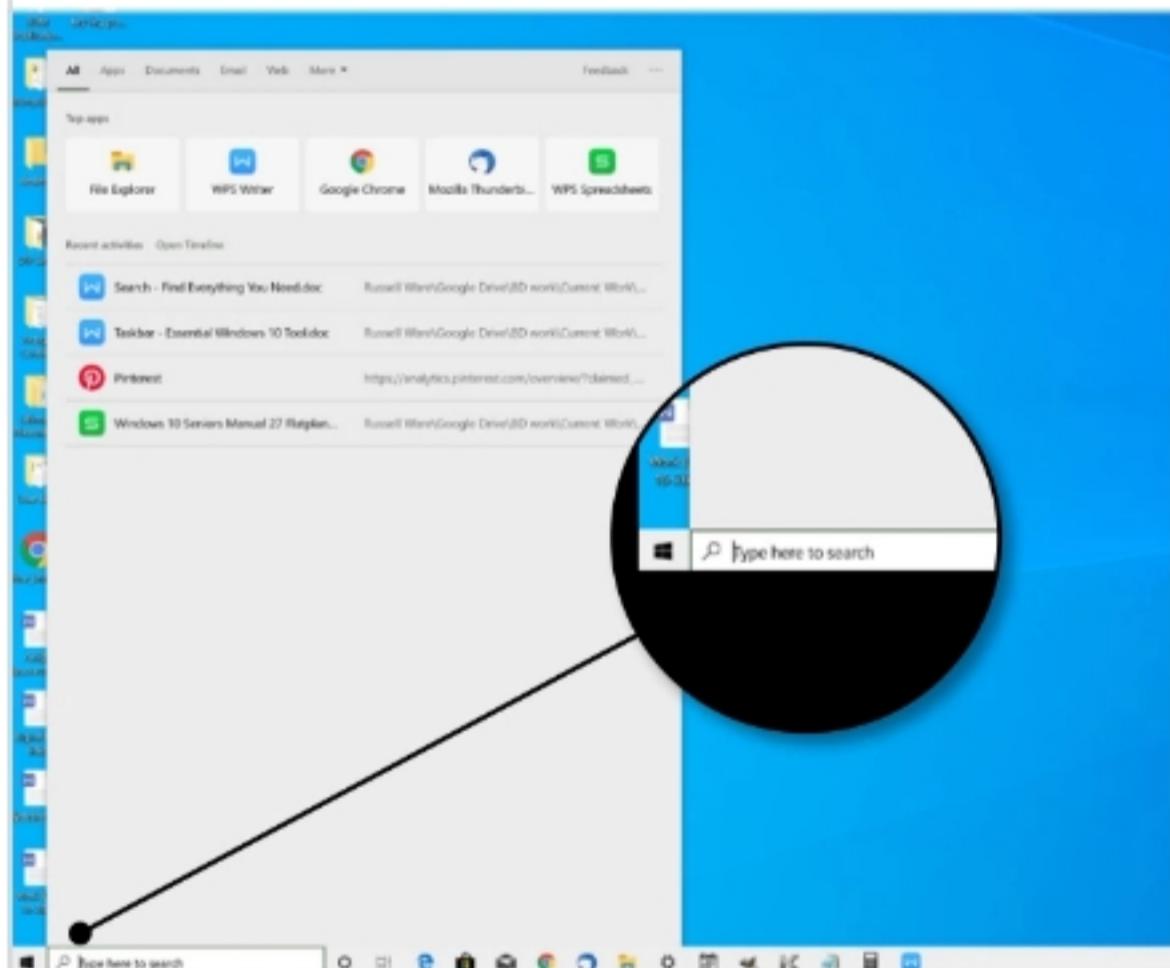
Step 3 If you don't want to display everything associated with your typed search term, you can use the tabs at the top of the search panel when it opens. These let you filter results to just Apps, Documents, Emails, Web, Folders, Music, People, Photos, Settings and Videos.
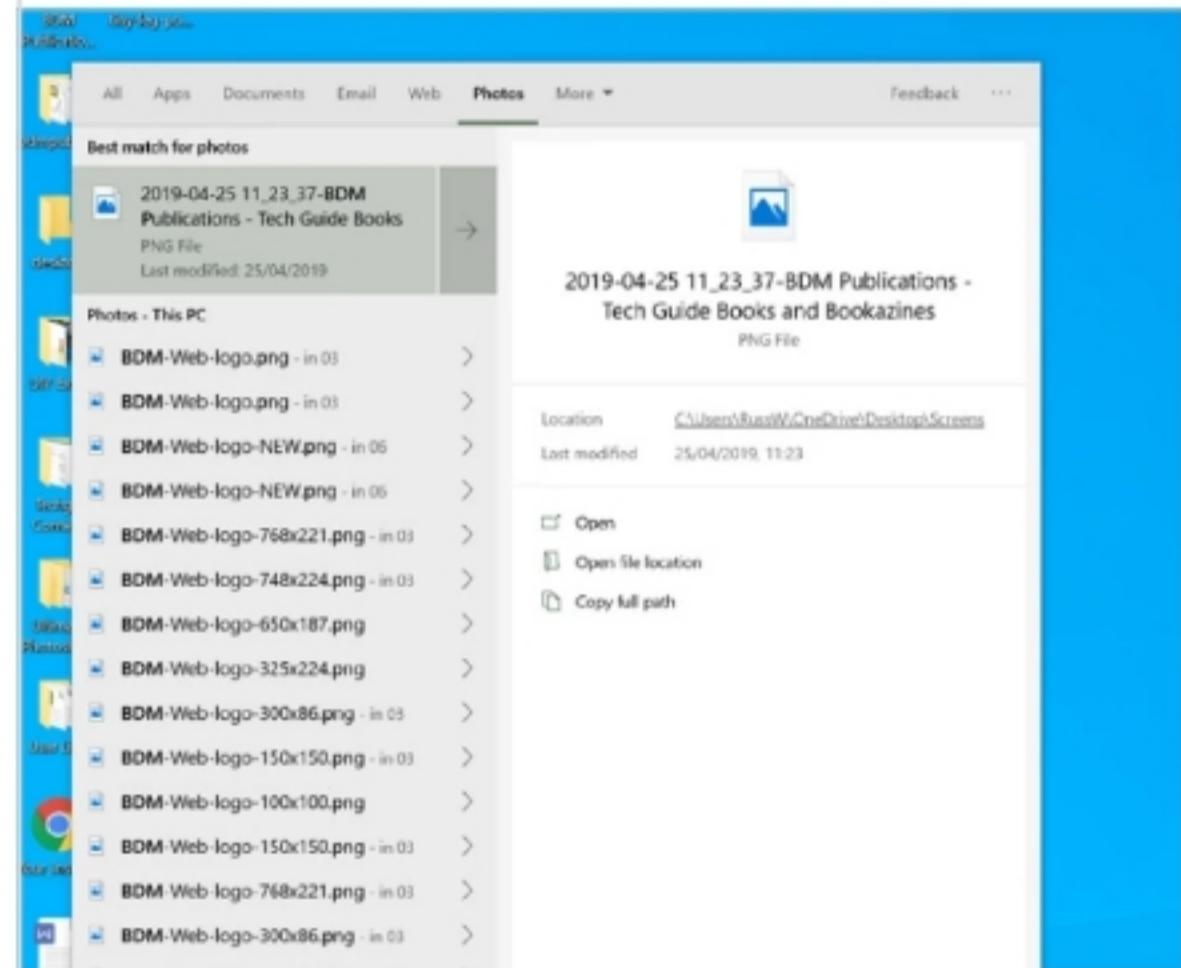
Step 2 If the app, setting, photo or document you are looking for is highlighted at the top of the search panel as you type, you can simply press Enter to open it. To view a non-highlighted result or category, you can just click on it to open it (open a web result in the browser, for example).
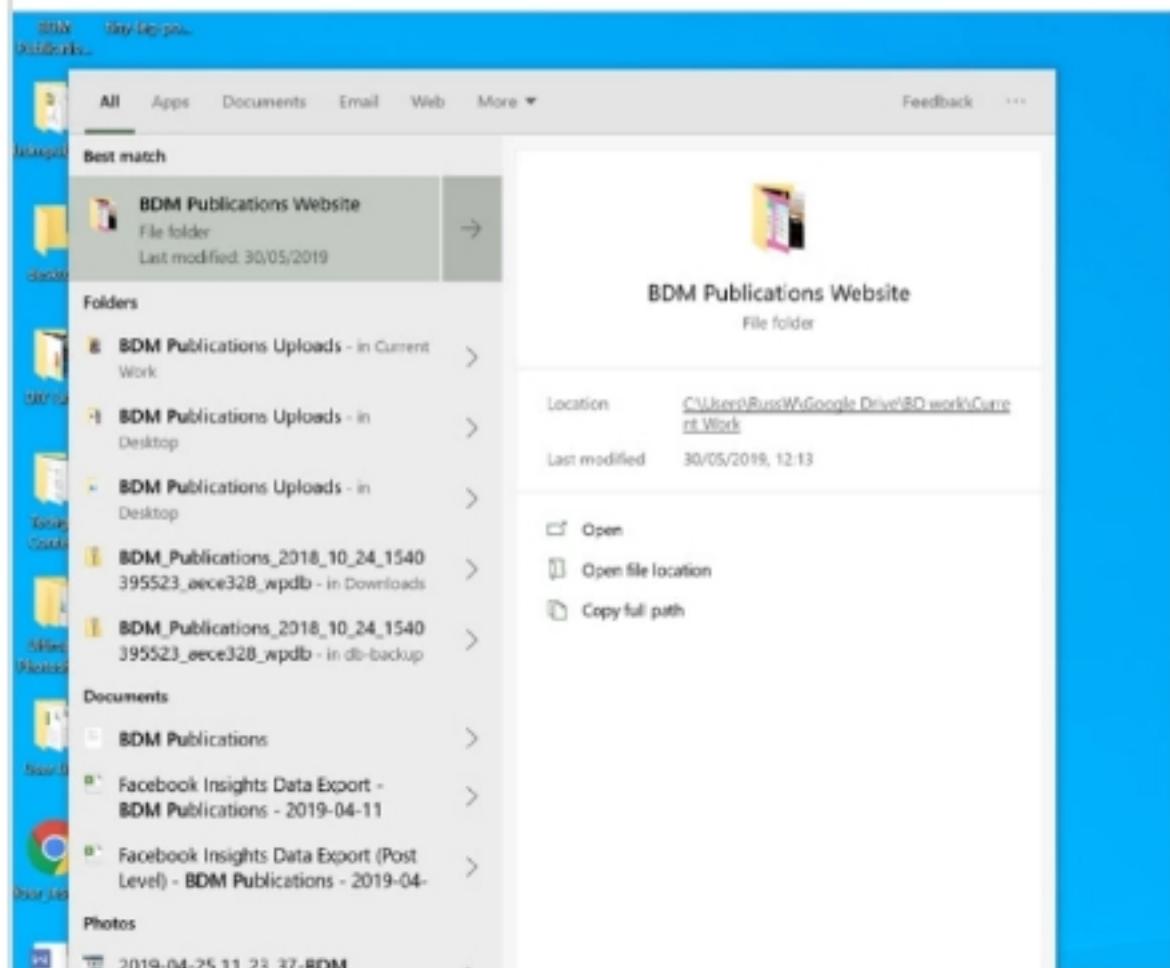
Step 4 Results will display more information on the right side of the search panel. For example, a web search will display a list of search results from Bing. Mouse-over any of the results in the list on the left, and then click the right-pointing arrow that appears to see more info in the search panel.
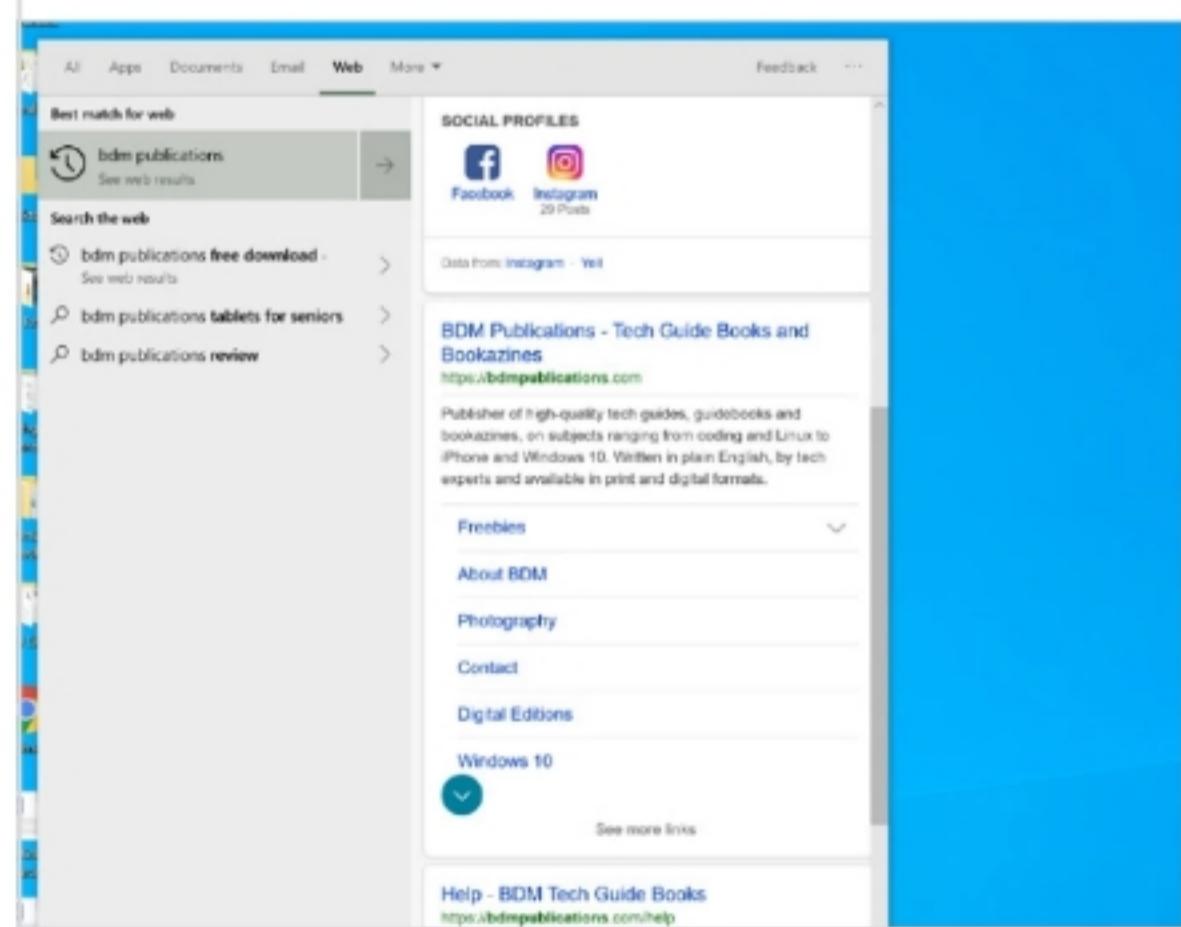
CORTANA AND TIMELINE

In addition to resuming past activities through Timeline, your personal digital assistant Cortana will suggest activities you might want to resume to help you stay productive as you switch between your phone, laptop, and other Cortana-enabled devices. This experience is powered by the same activities that appear in Timeline.
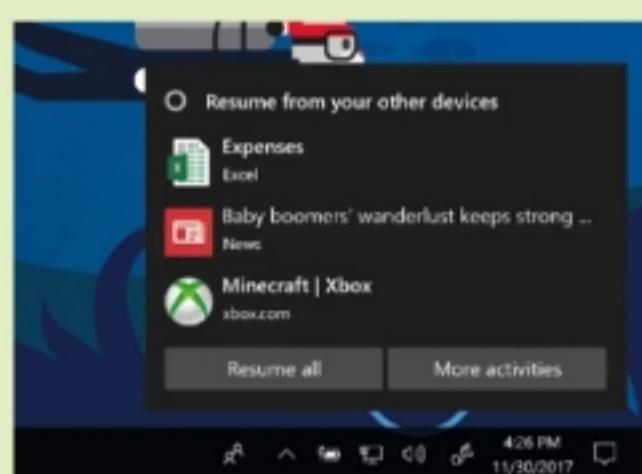
Getting Started

Use your PC normally. After a while, select the new Task View icon in the taskbar; you can also open Task View by pressing the Windows logo key + Tab. Below your running apps, you'll see past activities in the Timeline. If you have more than one PC, try using Timeline on all of them — you'll see the same activities no matter which PC you're using.

Activity History

The new activity history settings page allows you to control which accounts appear in Timeline. This is most relevant for users with multiple accounts, such as a personal Microsoft account, and a work or school account. Settings here also let you disable activity collection and clear your activity history.

Annotated Scrollbar

A very useful annotated scrollbar makes it easy to get back to past activities in Timeline. The scrollbar will change to display dates, days or even times within a single day. You can scroll the Timeline screen using the arrow keys on the keyboard, or by clicking and dragging on the scrollbar.

Activities

In Timeline, a user activity is the combination of a specific app and a specific piece of content you were working on at a specific time. Each activity links right back to a webpage, document, article, playlist, or task, saving you time when you want to resume that activity later.

All Activities

There's also a way to see all the activities that happened in a single day—just select See all next to the date header. Your activities will be organised into groups by hour to help you find tasks you know you worked on that morning, or whenever. And if you can't find the activity you're looking for in the default view, search for it.

View and Manage Your Activities with Timeline

One of the most useful additions to the Windows 10 OS in the Spring Creators update is Timeline. This handy feature allows you to easily get back to anything you were working on previously, without having to have dozens of windows left open all over your computer. You will only see the Timeline features when you click the Task View button if you have the latest update installed.

New Desktop

Just as with the old version of Task View, there is a button to add extra virtual desktops. Virtual desktops are essentially extra workspaces, so for example you can have one space with your email and chat windows open, and another where you're working on a PowerPoint presentation without email distraction.

Task View

Timeline introduces a new way to resume past activities you started on the current PC, other Windows PCs, and even iOS/Android devices. The feature enhances Task View, allowing you to switch between currently running apps and past activities. The default view of Timeline shows snapshots of the most relevant activities from earlier in the day or a specific past date.

Earlier Today

The Earlier Today panel shows the latest activities on your Windows 10 PC. Documents you have viewed, apps you have opened, and websites you have visited can all be displayed here as a thumbnail image. Click on any of the thumbnails to be taken back to that app, document or web page.

Managing Your Notifications

You have a high level of control over how you are notified of things happening or requiring attention on your Windows 10 computer. Let's take a look at managing your notifications.

Step 1 Notifications that are showing in the Action Center will disappear after you have clicked on them or actioned them. You can also remove them from the panel by hovering your mouse pointer over them and clicking the X that appears. Some notifications can be safely ignored, but be wary about which.
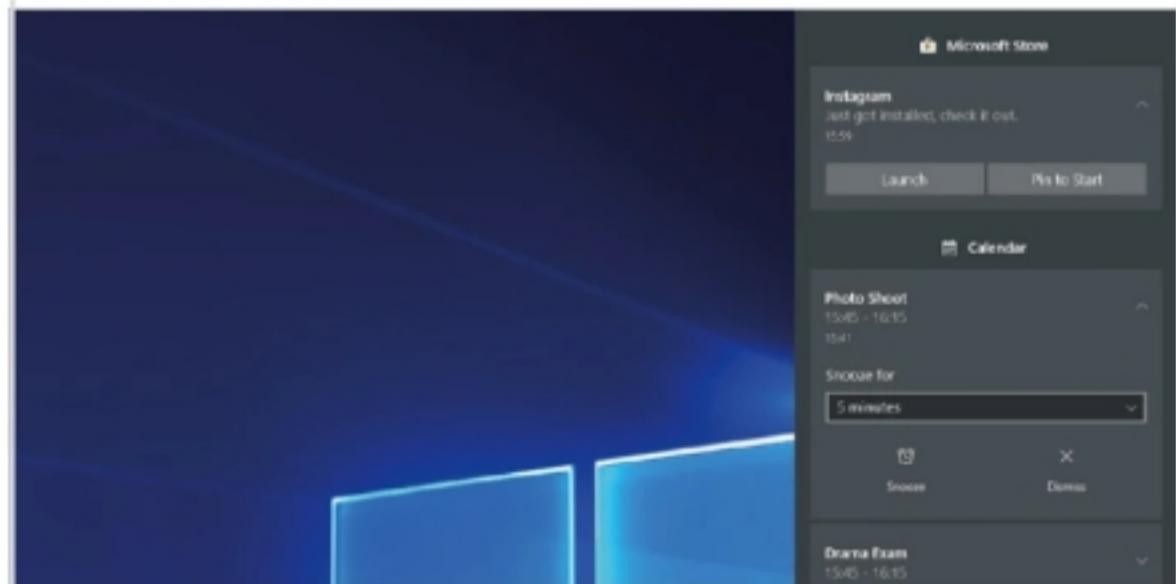

Step 2 Right-clicking on a notification heading in the Action Center will bring up a small action menu allowing you to choose to turn off future notifications from that app or service, or make it a priority. You can also go directly from this action menu to the main notifications settings.
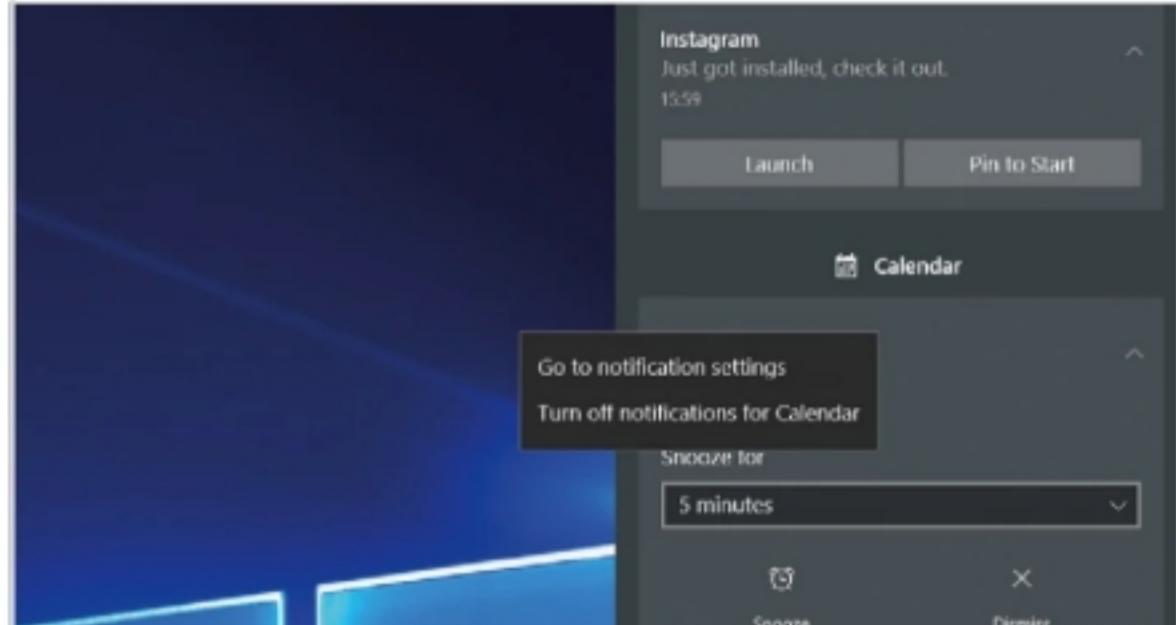
Step 3 Right-clicking on the Action Center button will bring up a small options menu, allowing you to turn on/off Quiet hours (a period when no notifications are shown), whether app icons are shown in the Action Center and whether the number of notifications is shown on the Action Center button.
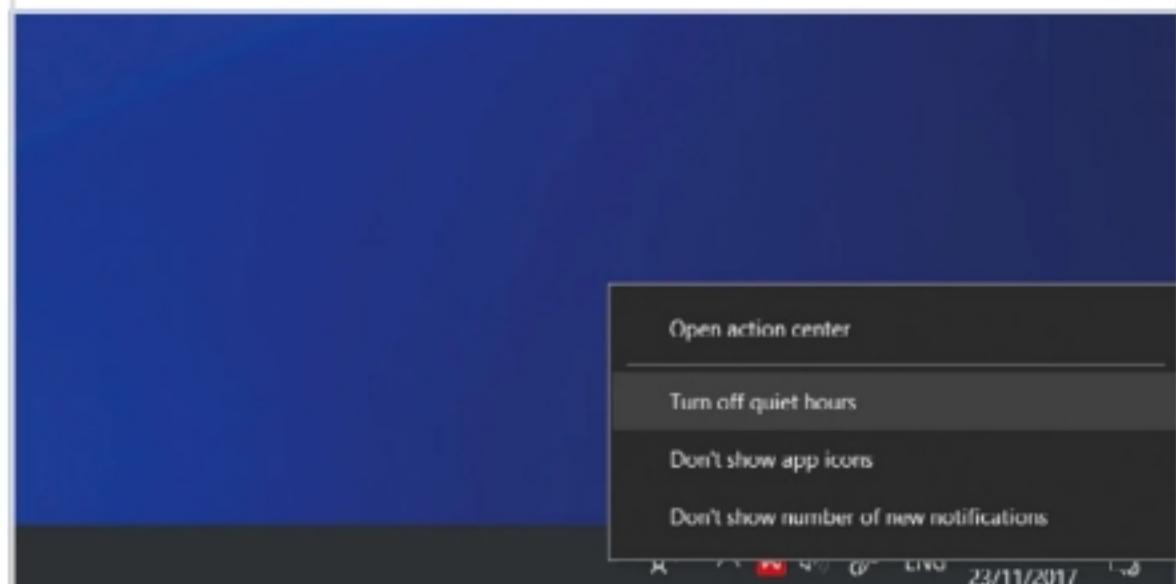
Step 4 Open the main Settings > Notifications & actions and you can see several more ways to manage your notifications and the Action Center. At the top you will see the panel for reviewing, adding and removing Quick actions buttons (that appear in the Action Center). Available Quick actions will vary.
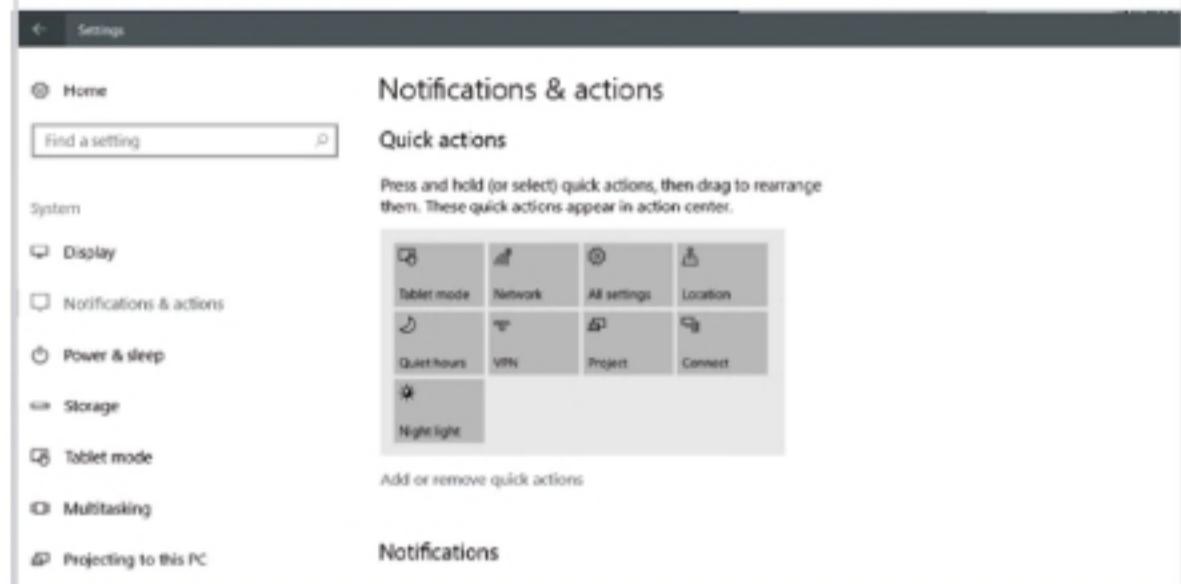
Step 5 You will also see a few sliders that allow you to control general notifications settings such as whether you get notifications from apps, notifications are shown on the lock screen of your PC and whether they are shown when you are duplicating the screen.

Step 6 Below these are sliders to enable or disable notifications for individual apps or services in Windows 10. Click on the name of the app or the feature and a new screen will open, letting you fine-tune the notification setting for each in much more detail (e.g. set the max number of notifications to show).
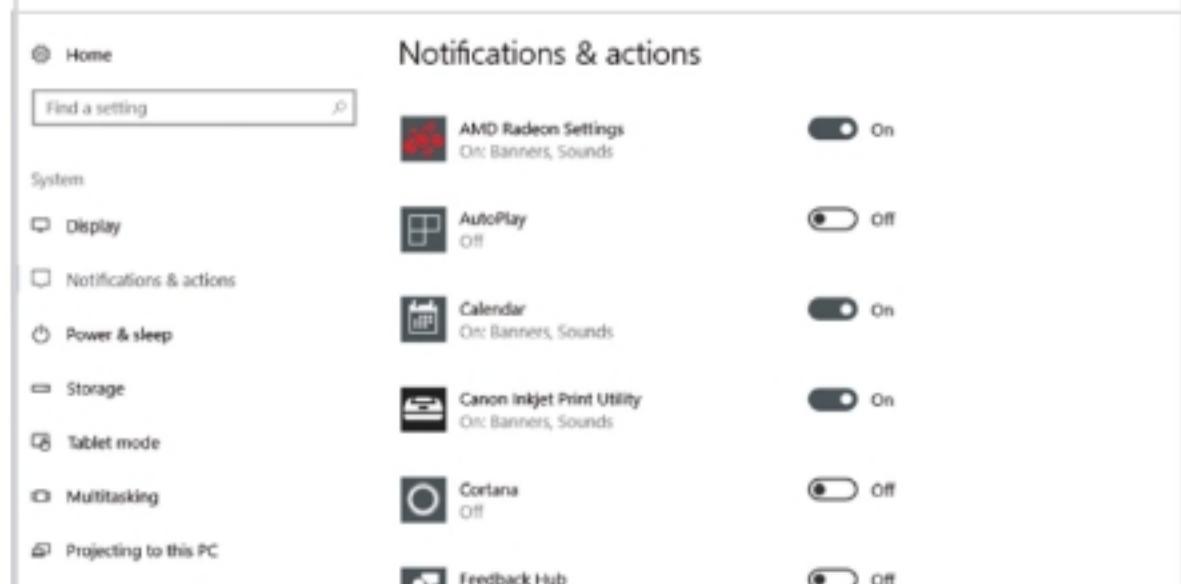
Manage Notifications in Windows 10

If you've used a modern smartphone, you should be all too familiar with Notifications and alerts. Windows 10 has embraced the use of similar notifications in a much bigger way than older versions. Here's how to manage those useful little pop-ups and alerts.

Viewing Notifications

Viewing your notifications is very straightforward, as they are all grouped together within the Action Center. You can see when you have new notifications by the numbered badge that appears.

**Step 1** Some notifications pop up in a small window in the bottom right corner of the screen as they arrive, others will simply arrive in the Action Center and display a badge on the Action Center button, again at the bottom right of the screen. To see your active notifications, click the Action Center button.

Step 2 Notifications are displayed under relevant headings and will be grouped together accordingly. So if you have two different Calendar app notifications, find them grouped together under a calendar heading. Notifications that pop up a window will vanish after a few seconds if you ignore them.

Step 3 Some notifications can be interacted with in the pop-up or in the Action Center. For example, after installing an app such as Spotify, a notification will appear telling you that the installation was successful, and letting you launch the app or pin it to the Start menu straight away.
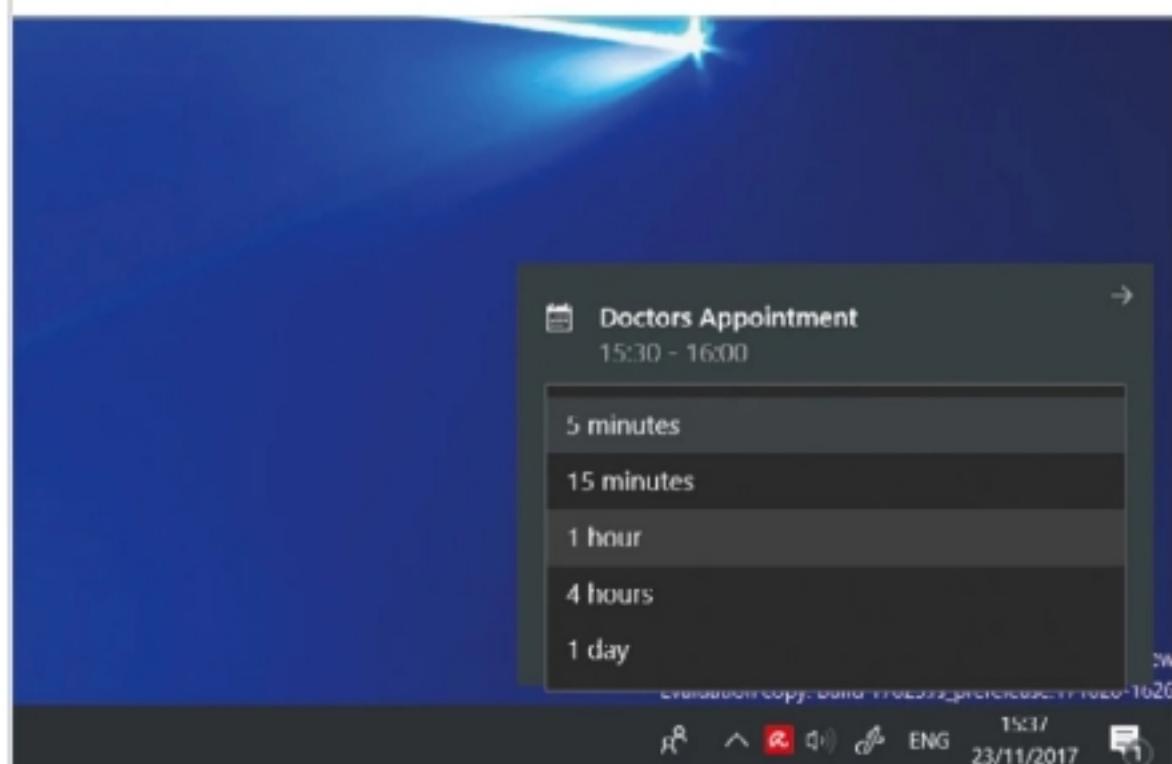
Step 4 Notifications of events from the Calendar app will always appear as a pop-up first and then appear in the Action Center. You have the option to interact with both, by snoozing the notification for a selectable period of time. Doing this will remove it from notifications until it pops up again later.
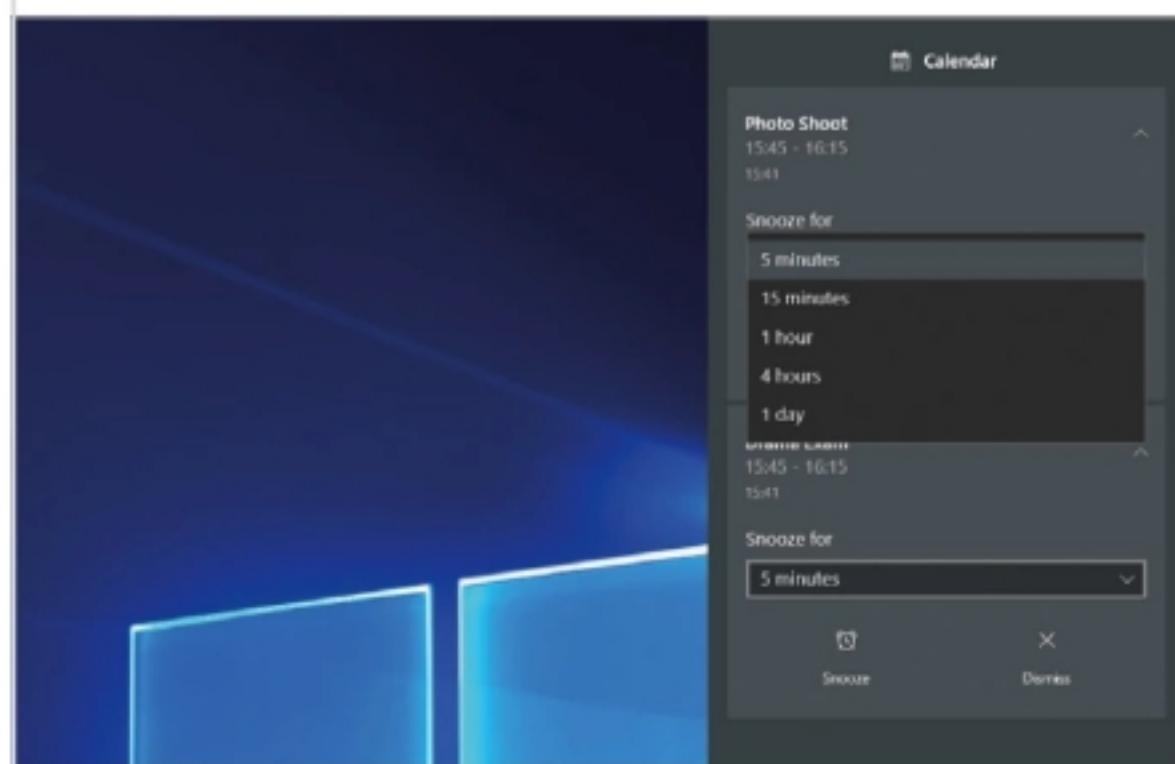
Managing Your Folders

Once created, folders can be adapted and customised in a number of ways. You can even change the default icon used whenever a new folder is added.

Step 1 You can manage a folder in a number of ways without even opening it. Right-click on any folder and the action menu appears. The exact options that appear will depend on the apps or software you have installed but can include scan for viruses, compress, shred, zip and more.

**Step 2** The standard (Windows 10) options in the folder action menu include Pin to Quick Access, Open, Share With, Pin to Start, Send To, Cut, Copy and Create Shortcut. If there is a small arrow next to an option in the menu, it means a further options menu will open when rolled over.

Step 3 Open the folder and a whole range of further options are available along the top of the new window. You will see four main tabs along the top: File, Home, Share and View. Each one of these, when clicked, will display a different set of further options relevant to the section.

Step 4 Most of these options are self-explanatory, such as copy, paste and select all but some are a little more confusing. Most casual computer users won't need to use 90 per cent of the options in their day-to-day use but it is worth understanding them anyway. Add a few files to the folder and experiment.

Step 5 If you want to get really deep into managing your folders, there are even more options to explore. Open any folder and right-click anywhere inside the main window. From the action menu that appears, click Properties. Here you can manage all sort of things, from security to icon style.

Step 6 To change the icon style, that will change the style of all folder icons, click the customise tab and then click Change Icon at the bottom. Scroll to view all of the available icons (downloaded icons can be accessed by browsing), click on your preferred icon and click OK.
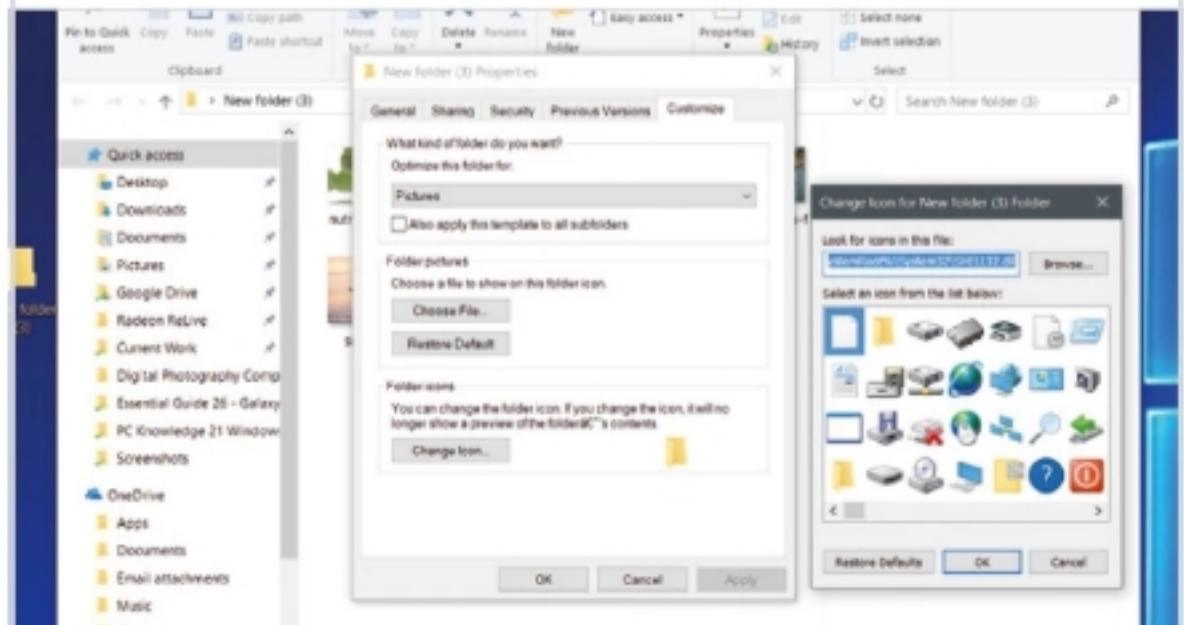
Create and Manage Desktop Folders

Despite all of the changes to the Windows OS, folders have remained as one of the core tools for organising your files. Much more than just boxes to keep your photos or music files in, folders can really help to improve how you use Windows 10 on a day-to-day basis.

Creating New Folders

It may sound too simple if you are a long time Windows user but here's a look at how to create new folders on the desktop and within other folders.

Step 1 On the desktop, right-click and select New folder from the action menu that appears. The familiar yellow folder icon will then appear at that position on the desktop (wherever you clicked), with the name automatically set as 'New folder' but highlighted ready to change.

**Step 2** You can leave the name as 'New folder' if you wish. If you then create a second folder next to the first, it will automatically be named 'New folder (2)'. You can rename a folder at any time by left-clicking on the title once, or right-clicking and selecting Rename from the menu.

Step 3 Double-click any folder to open it and view the contents. You can move items into a folder by selecting, dragging and dropping into an open folder or a closed one. If the folder is closed, drag the selected items over the top of it until the folder is highlighted, then release.
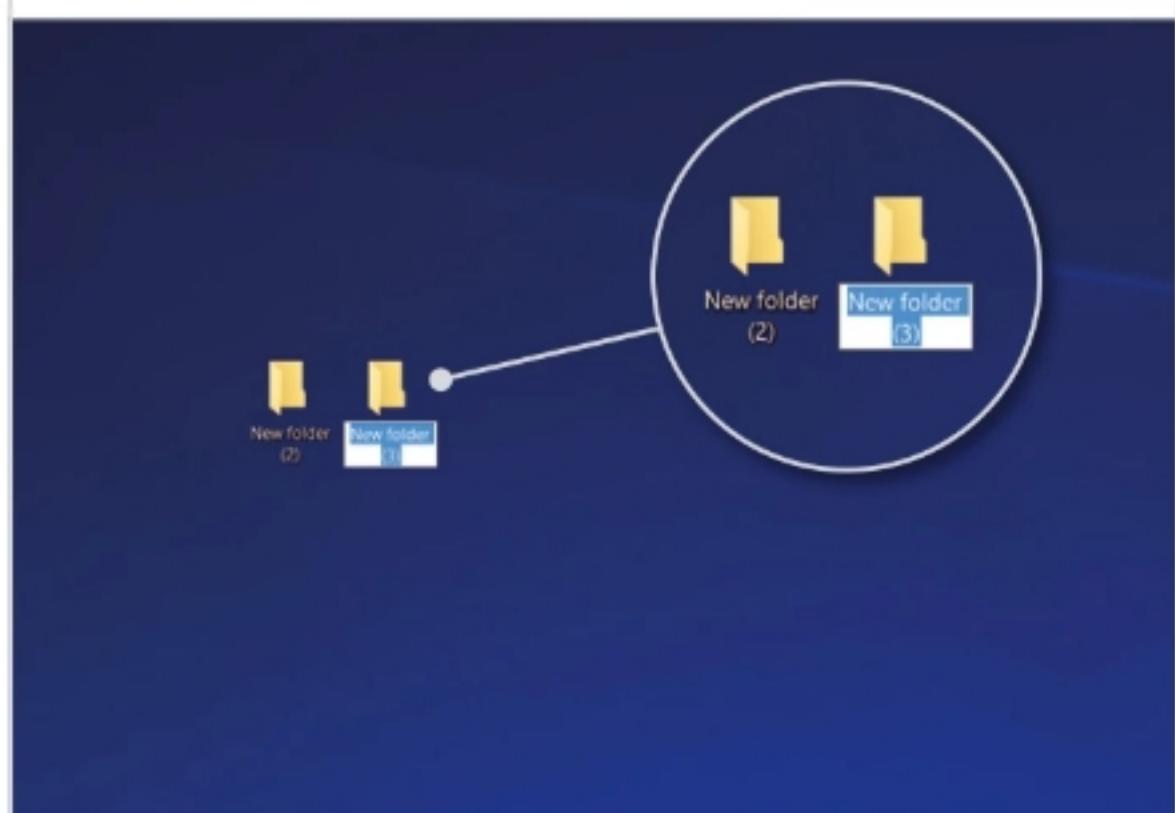
Step 4 To delete a folder, right-click on it and select Delete from the action menu. You can also click and drag the folder to the Recycle Bin icon on your desktop. Anything in the folder will also be placed in the recycle bin. To move folders around the desktop, just click, drag and drop them.
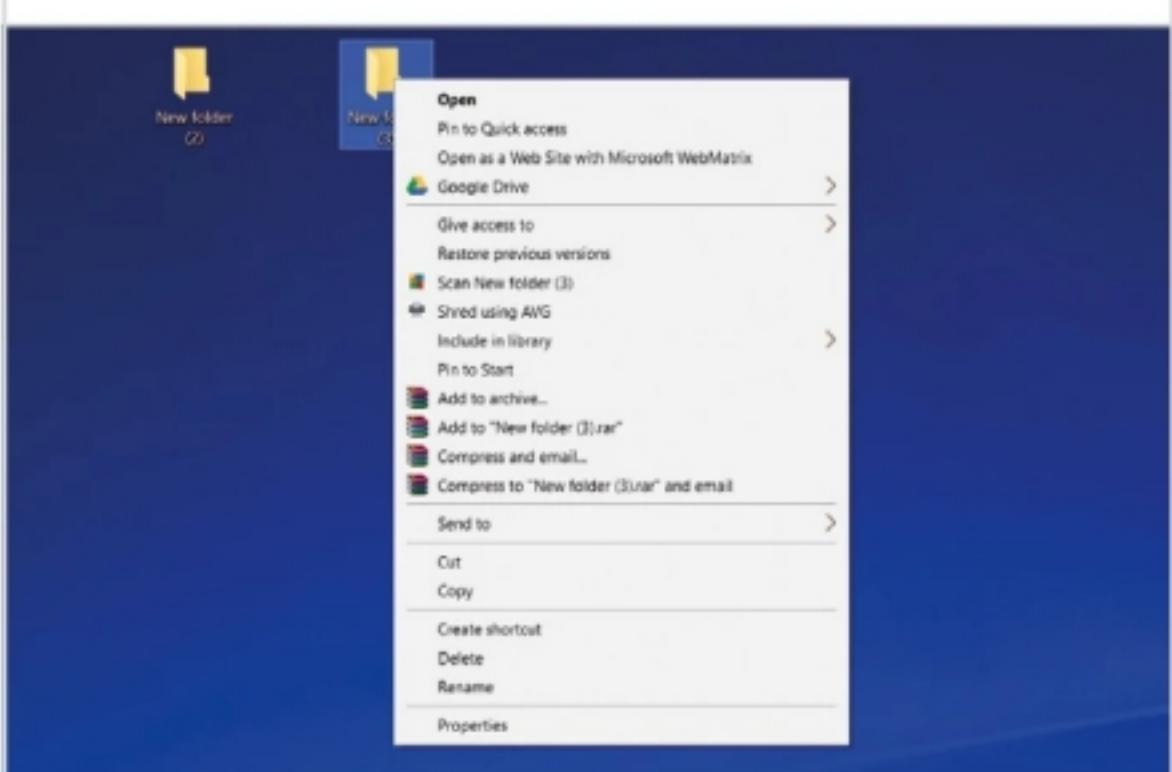
Step 5 Also from This PC (you might know it as My Computer if you previously used an older version of Windows), you can access the Programs and Features Control Panel area if you want to uninstall something.
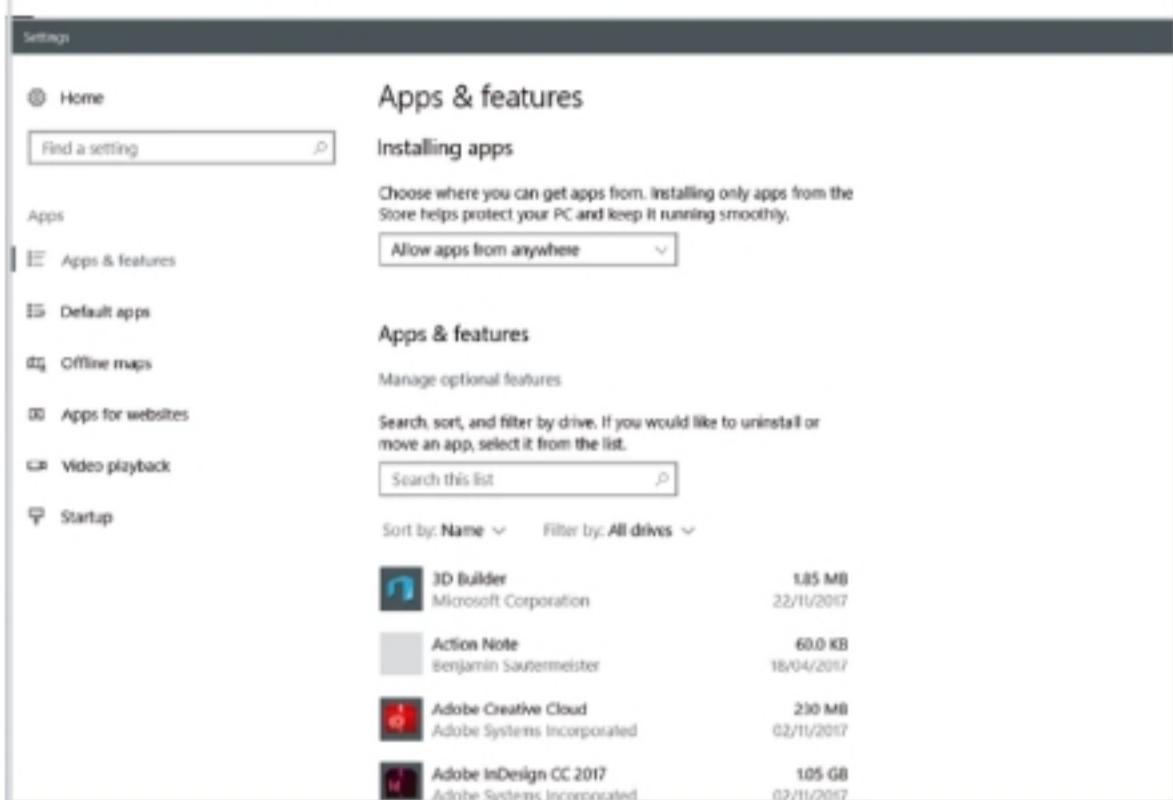
Step 6 File Explorer's Share tab also gets a new treatment, with the Share logo (first introduced with Windows 8's Charm bar) now used for file sharing from all apps. You can choose to email a file straight from the File Explorer window, add it to a zip file or share it with other Windows users.
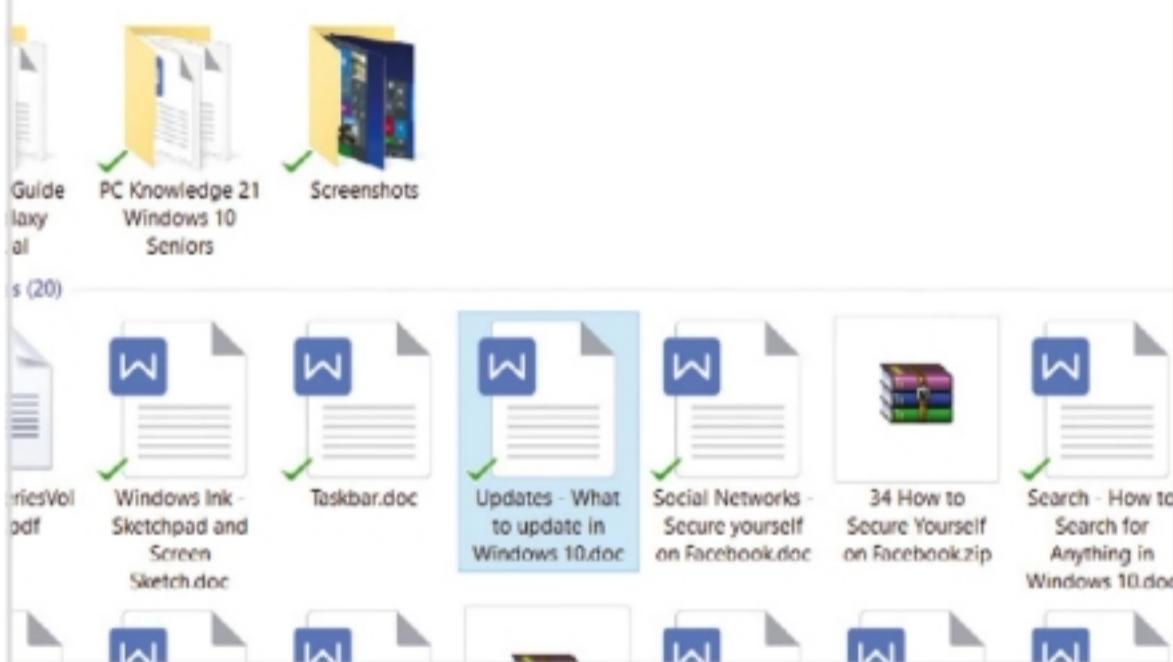
Step 7 If you want to see what other options you have for sharing – perhaps using the Windows Mail app - highlight the files you want to share, then click Share. A pop-up bar will appear on the left of the screen and will show you the options you have to share that file(s) or folder(s).
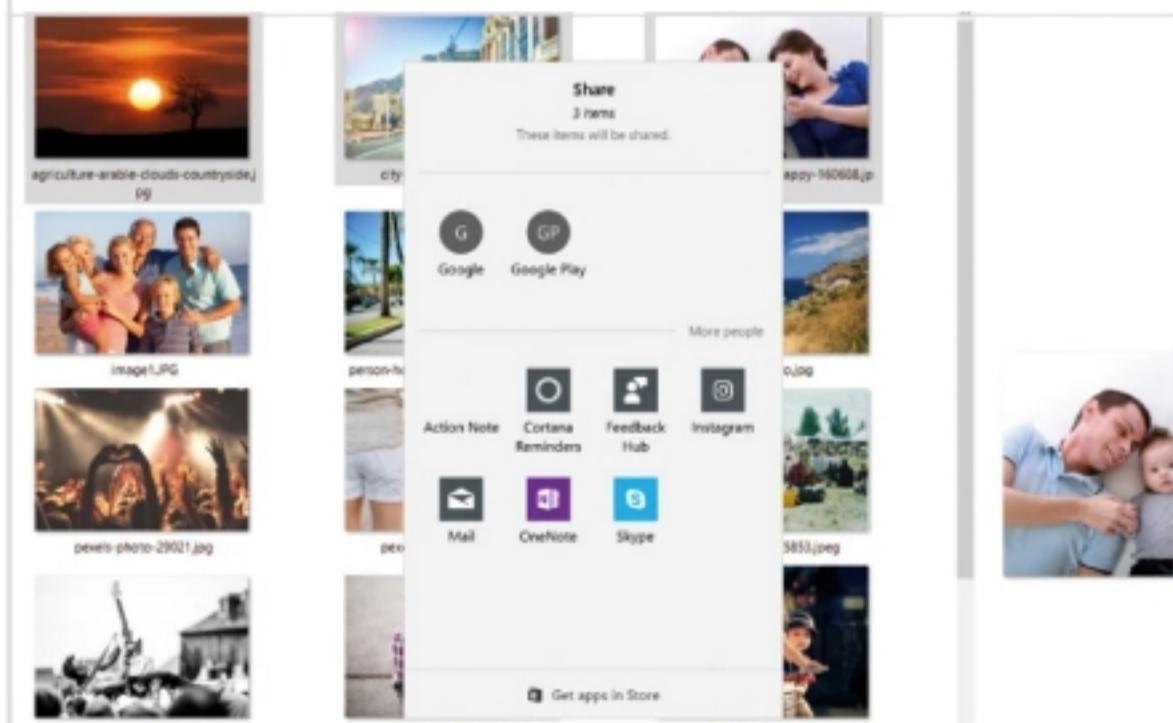

Step 8 The Windows 8 Charm bar has been abandoned in Windows 10 and the functions for Windows Store apps are hidden away inside the apps themselves; functions such as the Settings for the app itself and the ability to Print or Share.
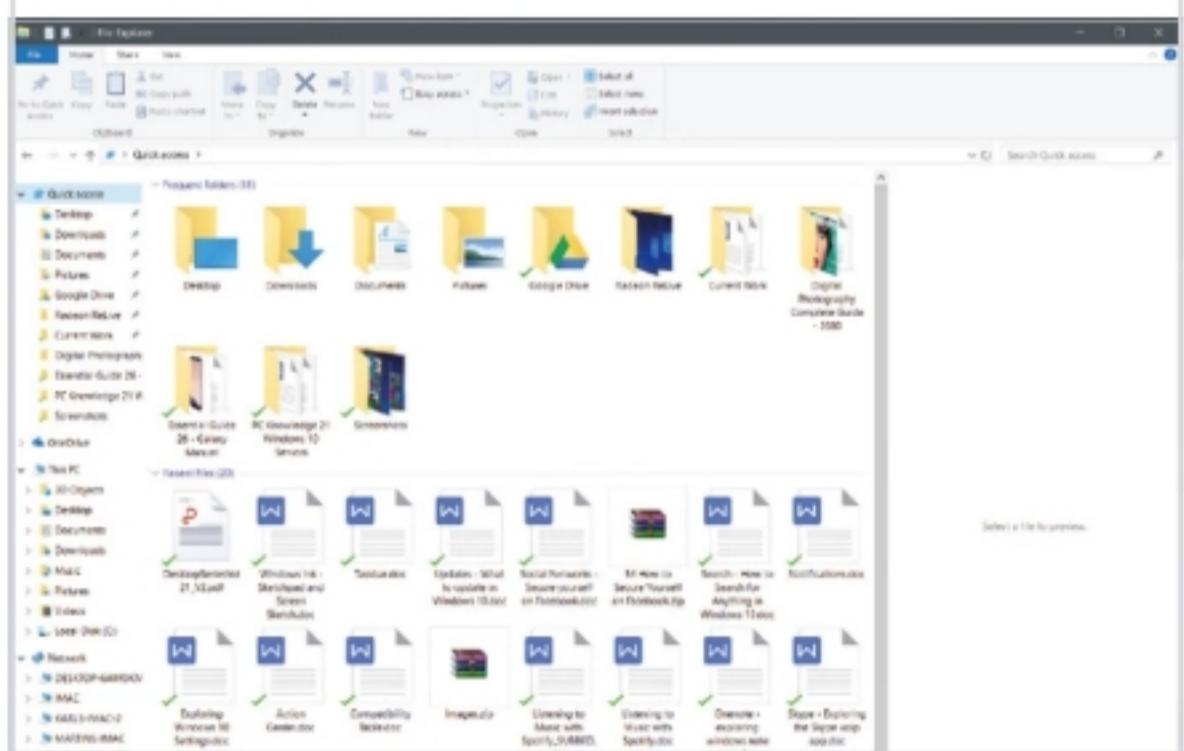
Step 9 If you've come from an earlier version of Windows, you might not be familiar with OneDrive. It's Microsoft's cloud storage application and it's available right from File Explorer in Windows 10, so you can access your files just as if they were on your own computer.
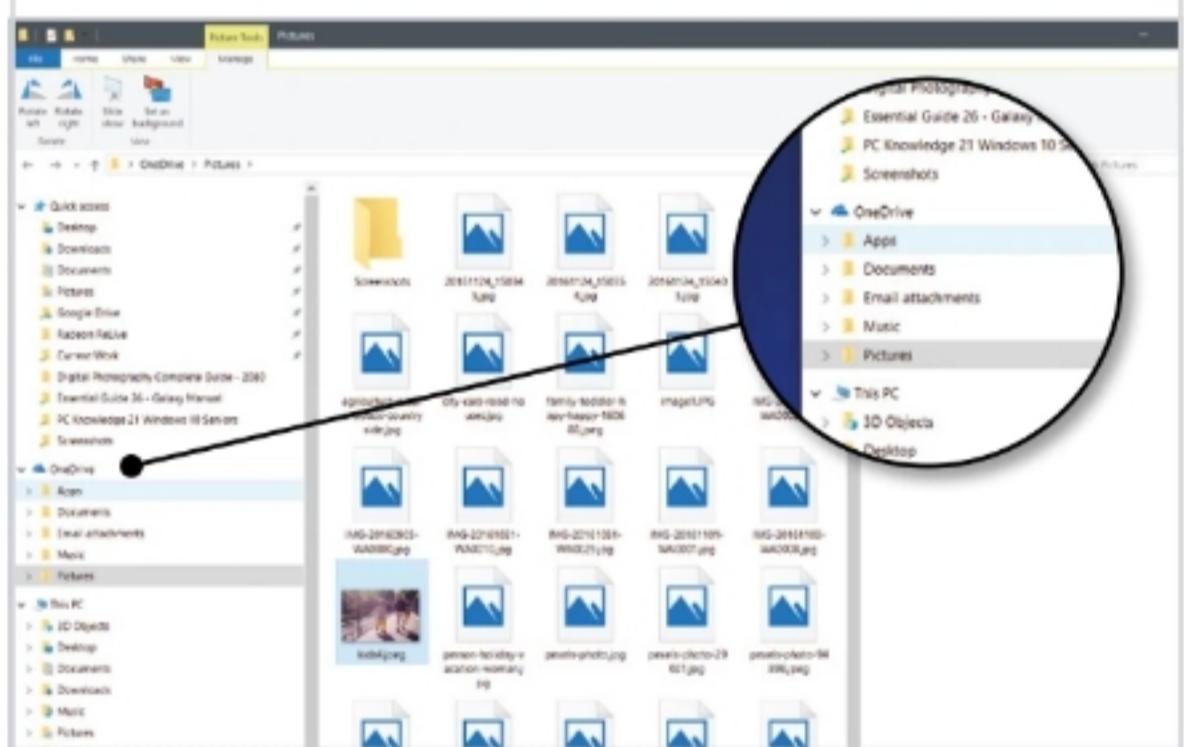
Step 10 On-screen notifications have changed in Windows 10. Unlike in Windows 8, where they display in the top right of the screen, all notification action is now centred on the bottom right. There's also a place where notifications reside after they've popped up.
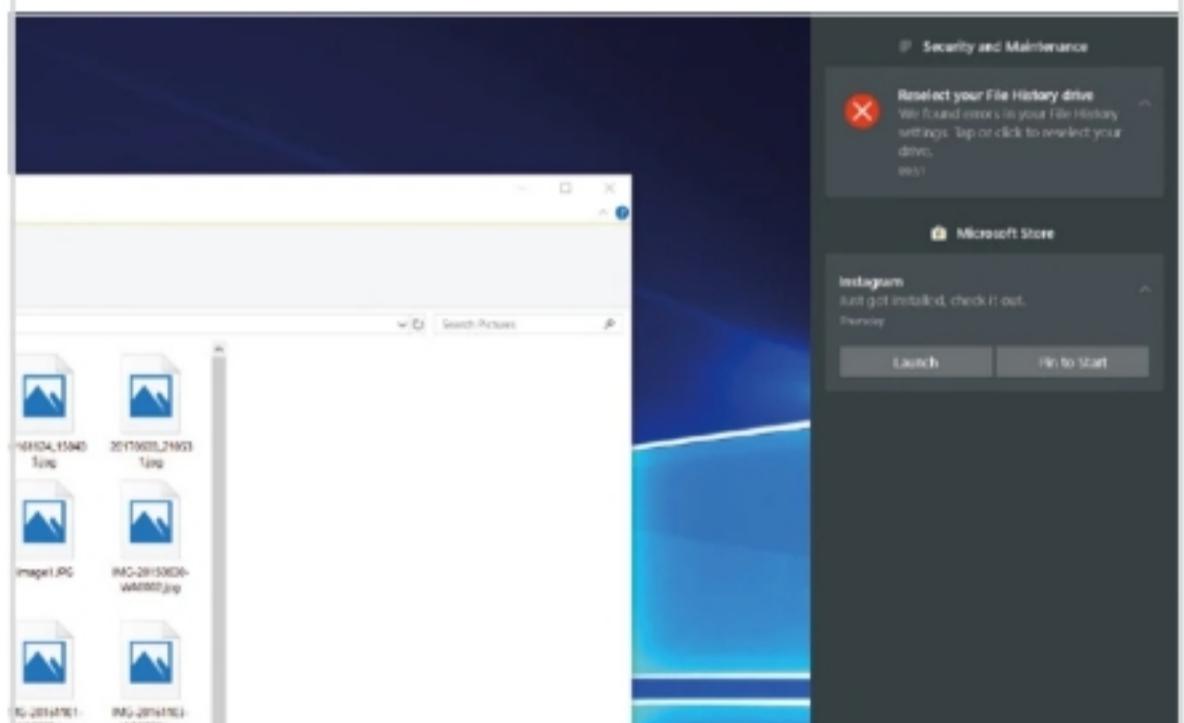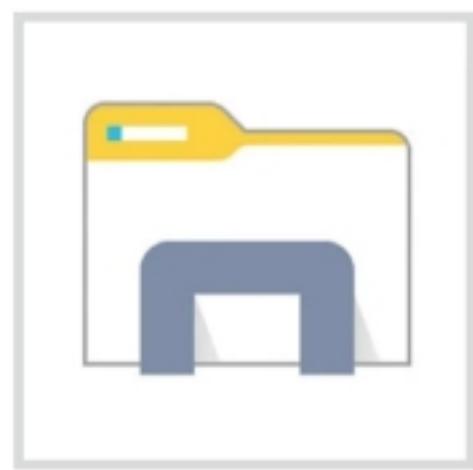
Learn How to Navigate Windows 10

Here we'll take you through the improvements to the general Windows 10 file browser. Many features remain from Windows 7 and 8 (such as clicking in the far right of the taskbar to minimise everything) and apps on the taskbar work the same.

What's New in File Explorer?

File Explorer is a much undervalued part of Windows. And while it hasn't fundamentally changed for several versions of the operating system, Windows 10 introduces some interesting enhancements, which we'll take you through here.

Step 1 The way you browse files in Windows 10 is broadly similar to previous versions of Windows, but File Explorer has been enhanced. The main Quick Access window shows you your most frequently used folders (after all, how many of us dip into more than five or ten folders in a day?) and also recent files.

Step 2 The sidebar also works on the same principle and via a new Quick Access feature you can pin folders or files that you want to stick around. It will also show you Frequent folders too. You can pin things permanently onto Quick Access by right-clicking them and selecting Add to Quick Access.

Step 3 There are also new icons across all File Explorer views, while there are a lot more file operations that you can access on the menu at the top of the window (known as the 'ribbon' in Microsoft speak) without the need to use the right-click menu. This is to make it easier for PCs with touchscreens.
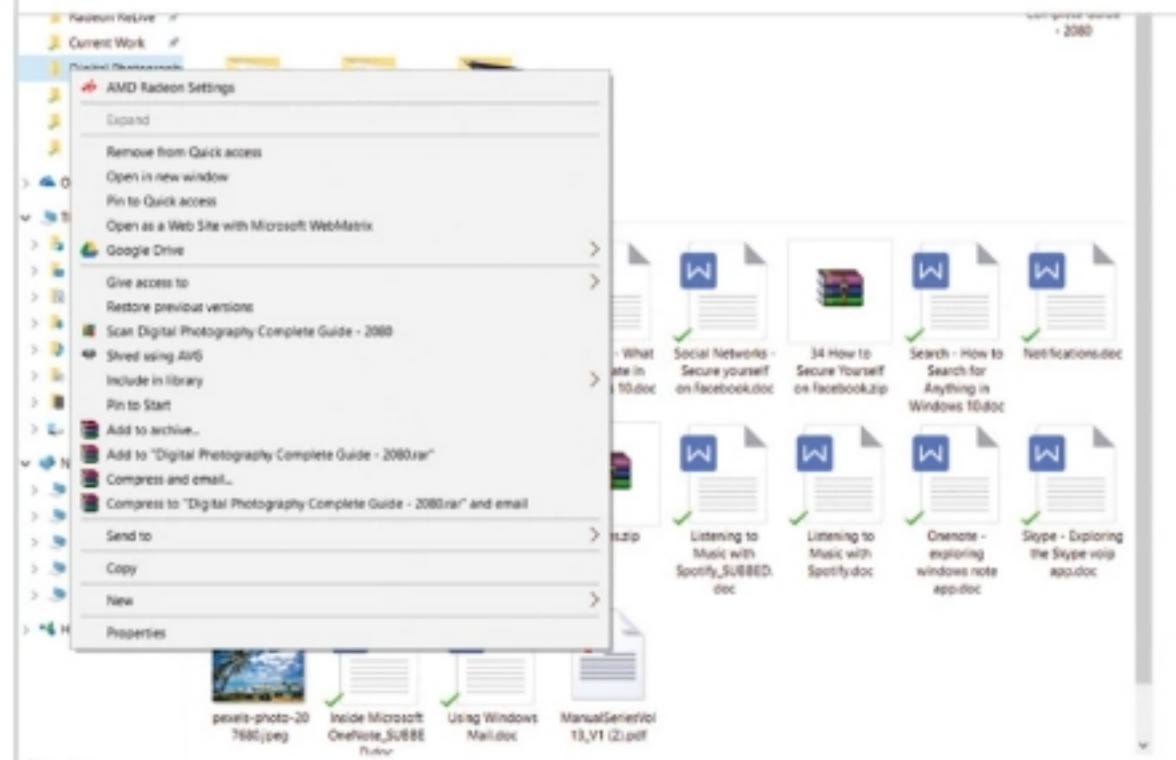
Step 4 This PC is similar to before, but the link to Control Panel has been replaced by the Settings app, which you can now see on the menu bar. Although the Control Panel is still present in the background of Windows 10, Microsoft intends for you to use the new Settings app and directs you there wherever possible.
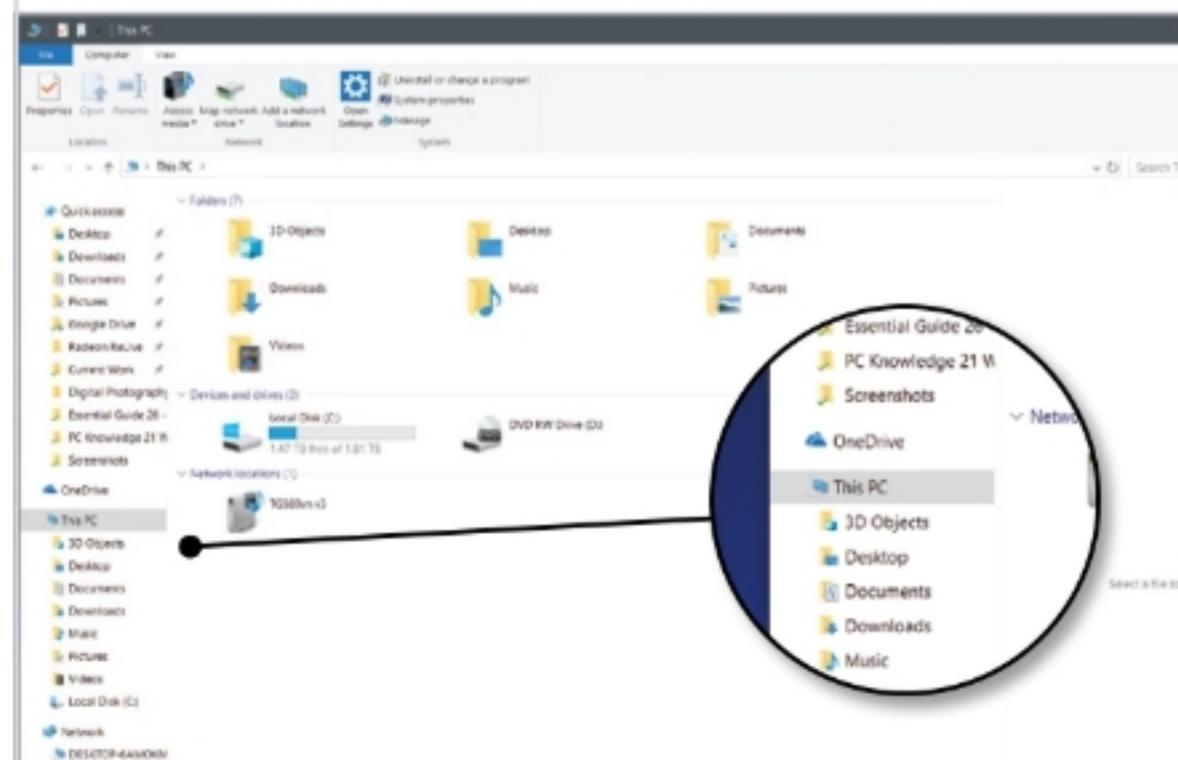
THE VIEW TAB

The View tab in the File Explorer allows you to completely change how the window looks, how files are displayed and even whether each item has a permanent check box next to it. One of the most useful tools in the View tab is the Details Pane button. This switches the Preview Pane to show a list of file details instead. This is particularly useful if you are looking at images.
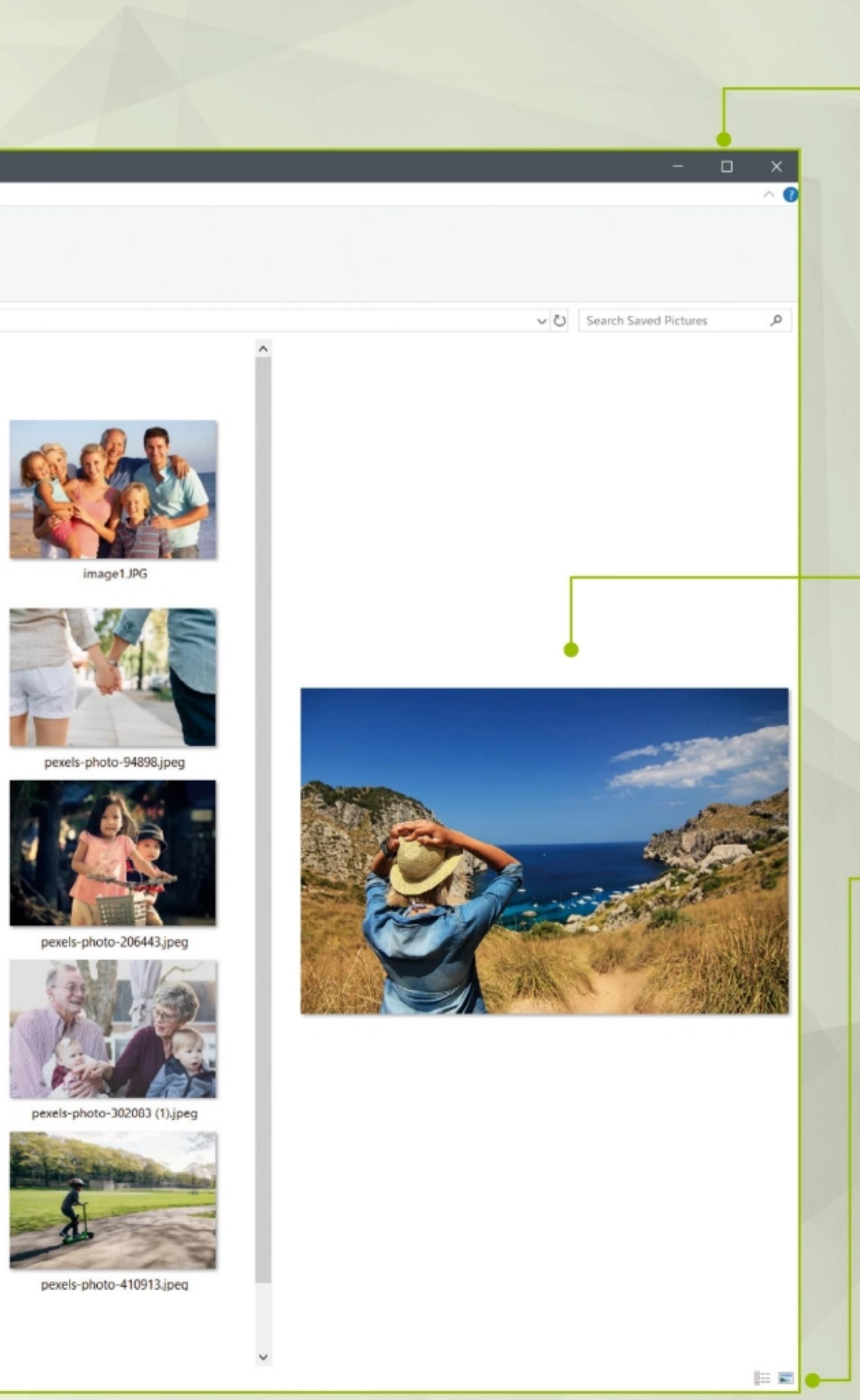
SHOW LIBRARIES

Your Libraries in Windows 10 are preset system folders that are the default locations for your Camera Roll, Music, Saved Pictures, Documents, Pictures and Videos. You can easily have these displayed in the File Explorer. Right-click on any free area of the Navigation Pane and from the menu, click Show Libraries. You can then expand the list of libraries by clicking the small arrow.

Window Controls

Almost every window that opens in Windows includes these controls. From left to right they are: Minimise, Maximise and Close. Just below the standard window controls is a small arrow and a question mark. The arrow is used to show and hide the File Explorer toolbar, which is useful for smaller displays. The question mark will, when clicked, open a help page.

Preview Pane

If the preview pane is enabled, approximately a third of the File Explorer window and indeed, any other folder that you open will be reserved for a preview of any selected files. Normally, only image, html and text files will display a preview in this pane. The preview pane can be increased or decreased in size by clicking and dragging the scroll bar to the left of it.

Folder View

The two buttons here let you choose between viewing the contents of the folder in a thumbnail format or alternatively, as a list. When the folder items are displayed as a list, you can choose to display a varying amount of information, including date last modified, file type and file size. Items shown as a list will still display a preview in the Preview Pane when selected.

Folder Contents Pane

When a folder is selected in the File Location sidebar, its contents are shown in the main pane. The contents of any single folder may vary greatly of course but Windows uses standard icons to show Word documents, text files, various different image formats and shortcuts to apps and software. As you can see here, images will usually be displayed as a thumbnail unless view settings have been changed.

image1.JPG
pexels-photo-94898.jpeg
pexels-photo-206443.jpeg
pexels-photo-302083 (1).jpeg
pexels-photo-410913.jpeg

Exploring the Windows File Manager

The File Explorer is much the same as it was in previous versions of Windows but it is still worth you exploring it. The File Explorer is one of the most overlooked tools in Windows but if you want to be able to find your accumulated photos, music files, and word documents without having to use Search, it is definitely something you should be familiar with.

File Explorer Toolbar

This tabbed toolbar contains all of the tools you need to manage the different files and folders you can view. The main tab is Home, which contains tools for pinning to the Quick Access pane in the Start menu, copying, pasting, moving and renaming files. Once you have selected a file or folder in the main pane, the tools become active.

Navigation Pane - Folders

The left-hand sidebar contains a list of different file folders on your computer. Clicking on any of the folders shown here will display the various files and folders inside, in the main pane. The list is split into sections, including Quick Access/Recent, OneDrive and This PC. If you right-click on a blank area, you can choose to show All Folders here.

## Info Bar

The thin bar along the bottom of the File Explorer displays several bits of useful information. If nothing in the main window is selected, the info bar shows the total number of items in the selected folder. Click on a file and the file size is also shown here. If you select several files, the number of items selected is shown, along with the total size of all selected items combined.
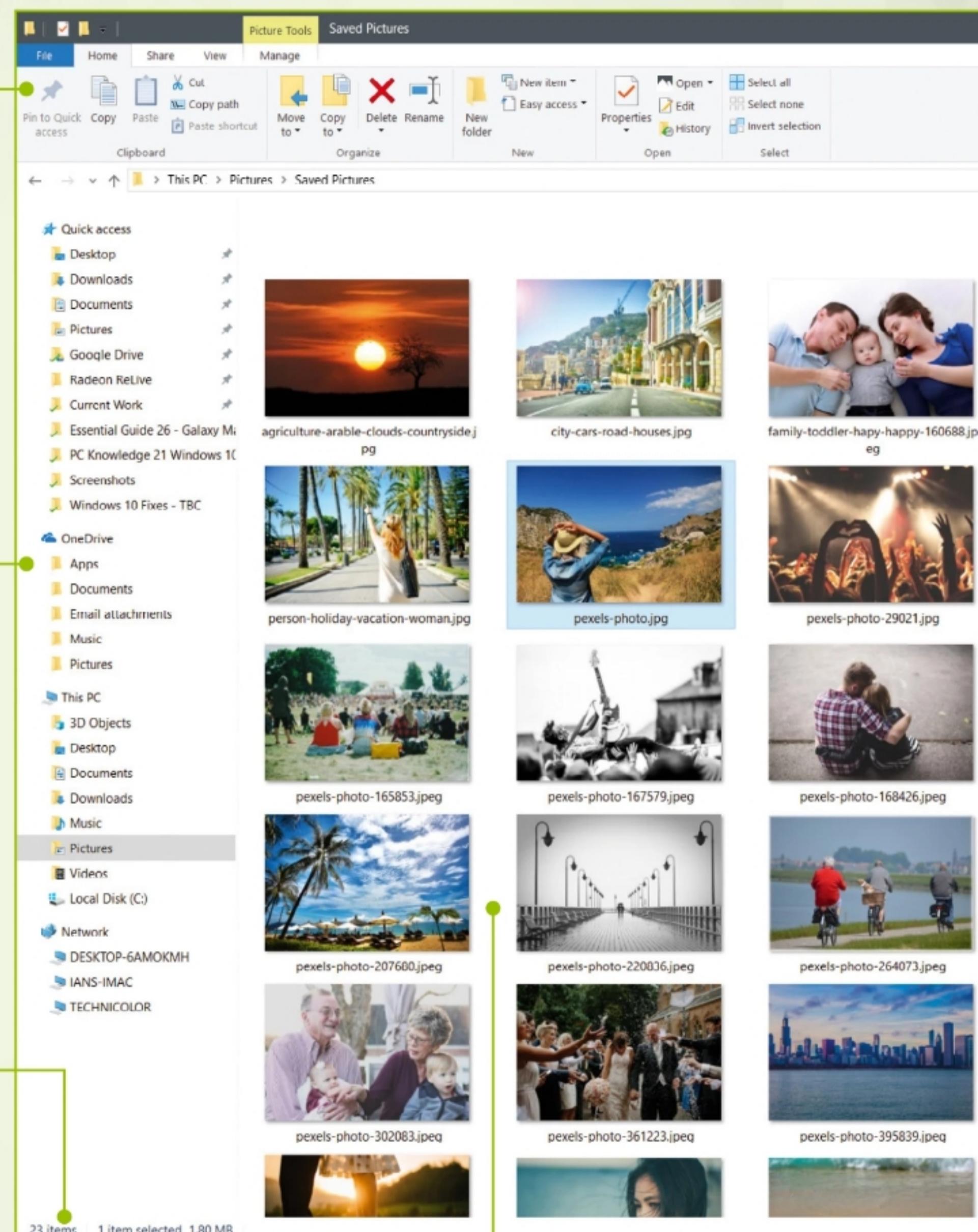
Pinning Apps

A few apps and other software will be pinned to the taskbar when you first use your Windows 10 PC. You can add more as and when you choose. To pin apps, right-click on the app icon anywhere you see it (Start menu for example), click More and then Pin to taskbar. Shortcuts can also be pinned.


Peek

Hovering over any open app icon in the taskbar brings up a Peek preview of the window. If a movie is playing, for example, you will see it playing here too. If you mouse over the preview, the X icon appears so you can close the window down directly from the taskbar should you wish to.


System Icons

Quick access to various system tools, including sound and network settings. The exact icons that appear here will vary depending on your system set up and apps installed. If we were using a laptop here rather than a desktop, for example, a battery icon would be in the notifications area.
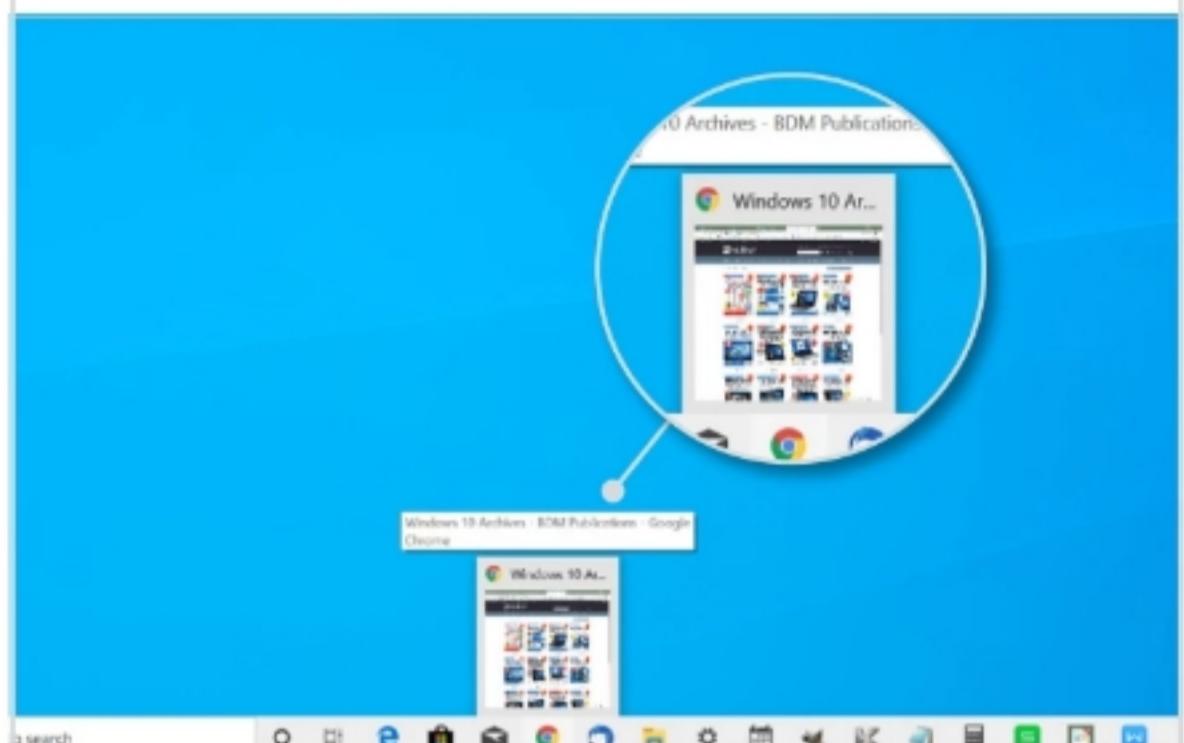
Taskbar Tools

The taskbar contains several unique tools. These can be shown or hidden as you prefer. They include the People app, Task View, the Windows Ink workspace and the Touch keyboard button. Right-click anywhere on the taskbar and you can show or hide these tools in the menu that appears.

Notifications

The Action Center gathers together all your pop-up notifications from things like the email app or Windows update. It also features Quick Settings buttons for things like Wi-Fi. The Anniversary update added notification badges, meaning you can see how many unread notifications you have.
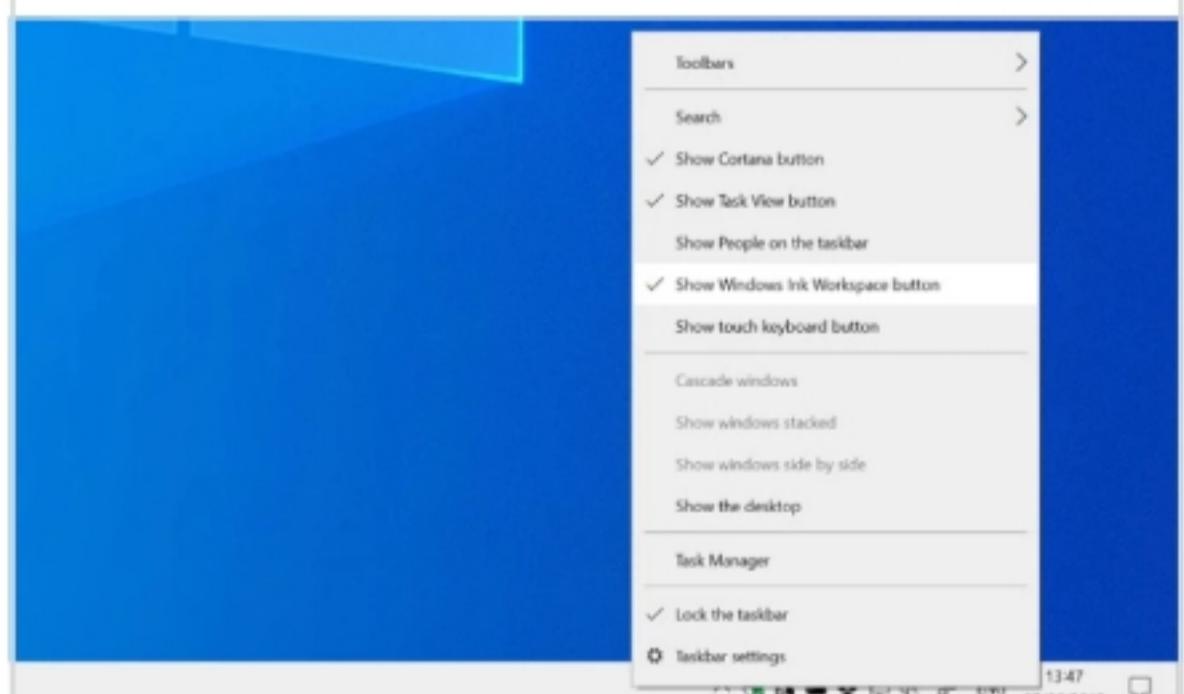
Jump Lists

Right-clicking anything on the taskbar once again brings up a context menu. Apps such as Word and Excel feature jump lists, showing you recent files that you can pin to the list using the drawing pin icon. What appears in the jump list varies between apps, e.g. Edge will show recent websites visited.
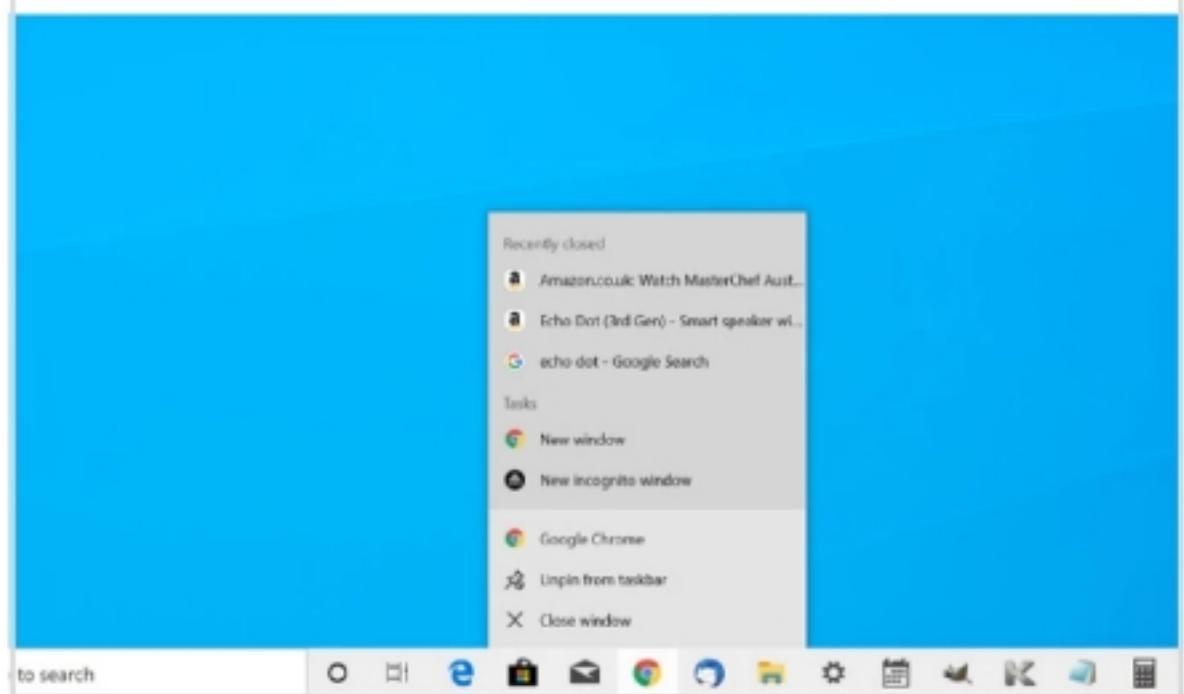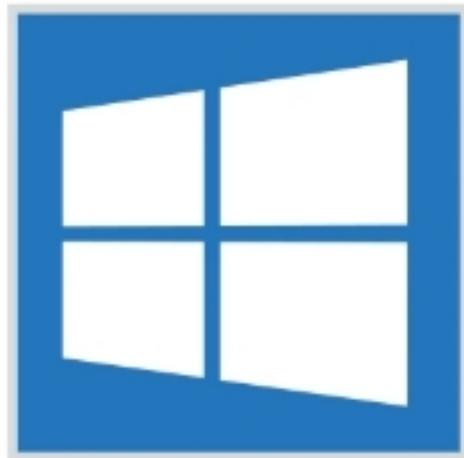
How to Quickly Switch Between Tasks

The taskbar not only gives you quick access to several key Windows 10 tools like Search and Cortana, it can be further customised with pinned apps, system tools and settings. Making full use of the taskbar can really improve how Windows 10 works for you.

Mastering the Windows 10 Taskbar

There are a lot more features and functions of the taskbar than may first meet the eye. Let's take a look at how you can discover and master them.

**Start Menu Button** Clicking this, as you will no doubt know by now, opens the Start menu. This is where you find all of the apps and software on your computer listed, along with Live Tiles and system folders. Right-clicking on the Start menu button opens a different menu, containing links to system tools like Task Manager.
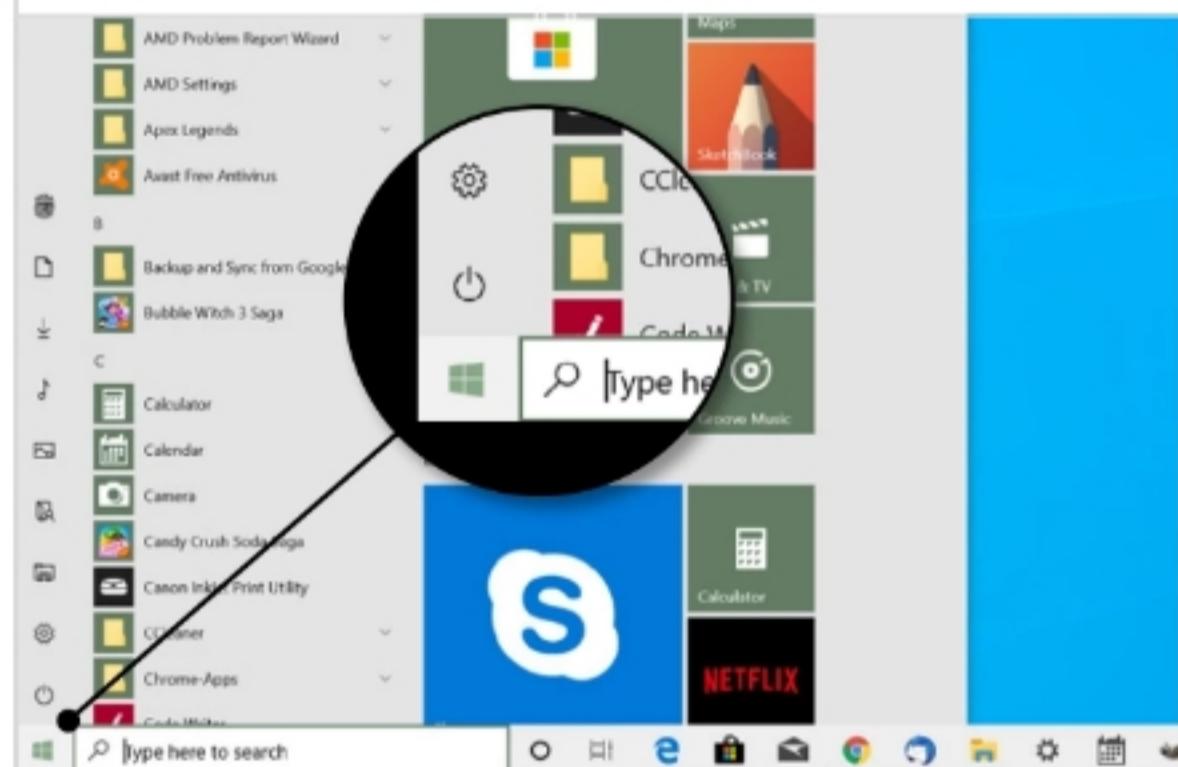
Cortana Cortana is now separated from Windows search, and is activated using the small circular button next to the search box. It is now a more focused virtual assistant, allowing you to create reminders, lists and perform functions using voice, or one of the many Cortana-connected apps.
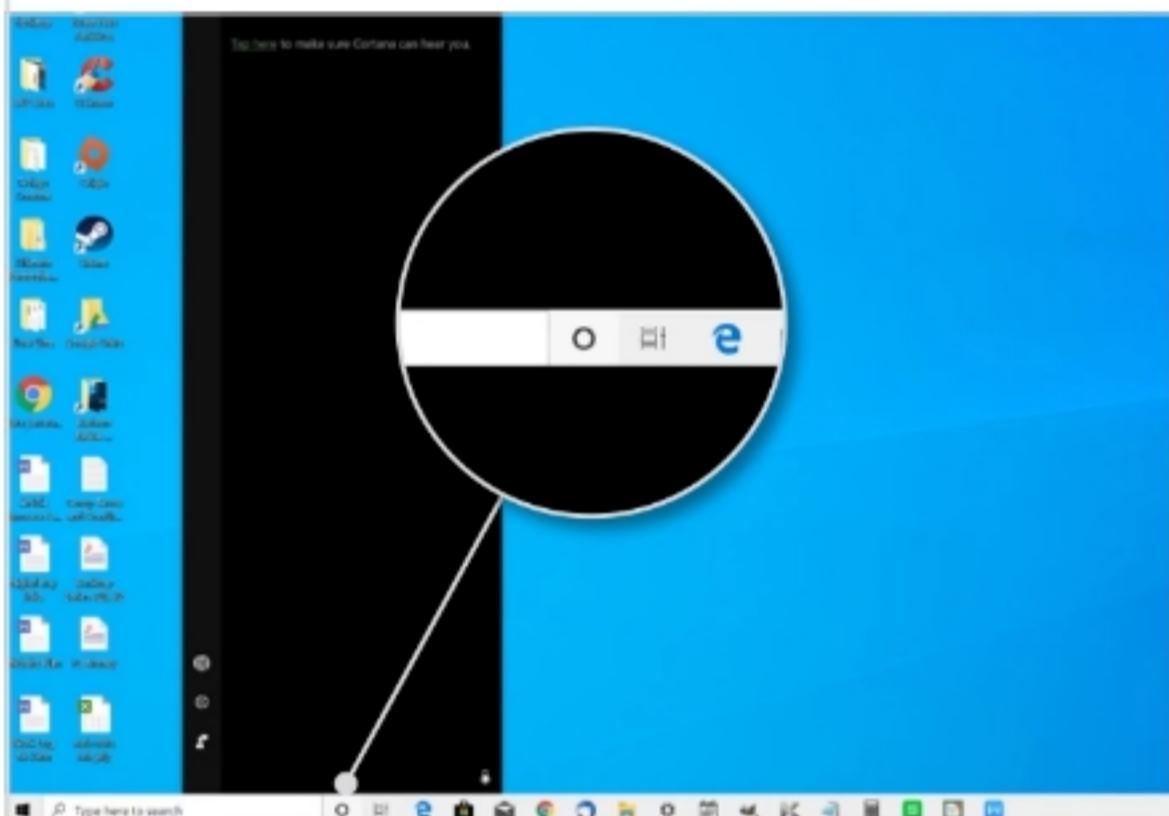
Search Box The Search box is integrated into the taskbar in Windows 10, so it is always visible and available. Just click anywhere in the search box to begin using it. If you prefer, you can hide the search box completely, or replace it with a search icon. Right-click on the taskbar to change between these.
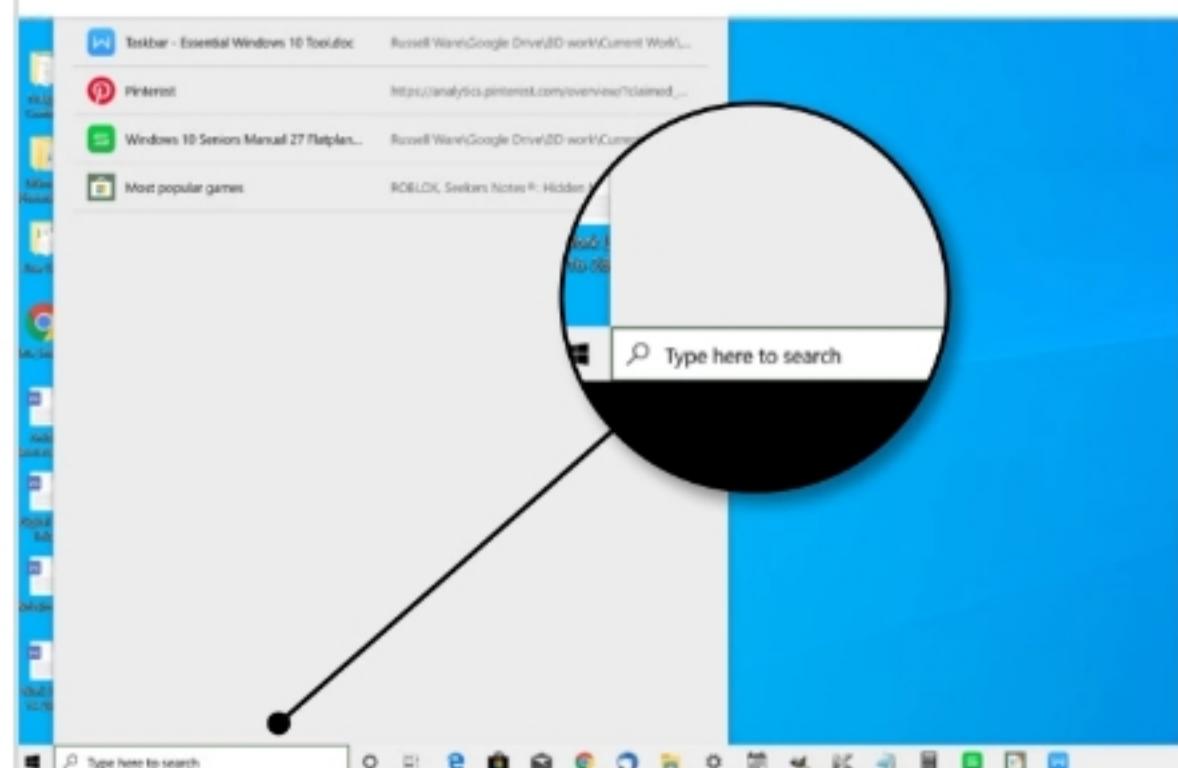
Task View The icon next to the search bar is Task View, which also includes Timeline. This is Windows 10's new way to switch between open apps and it's really rather good, providing you can get used to using it. Click to open or alternatively you can open the Task View by pressing the Windows Key + Tab.
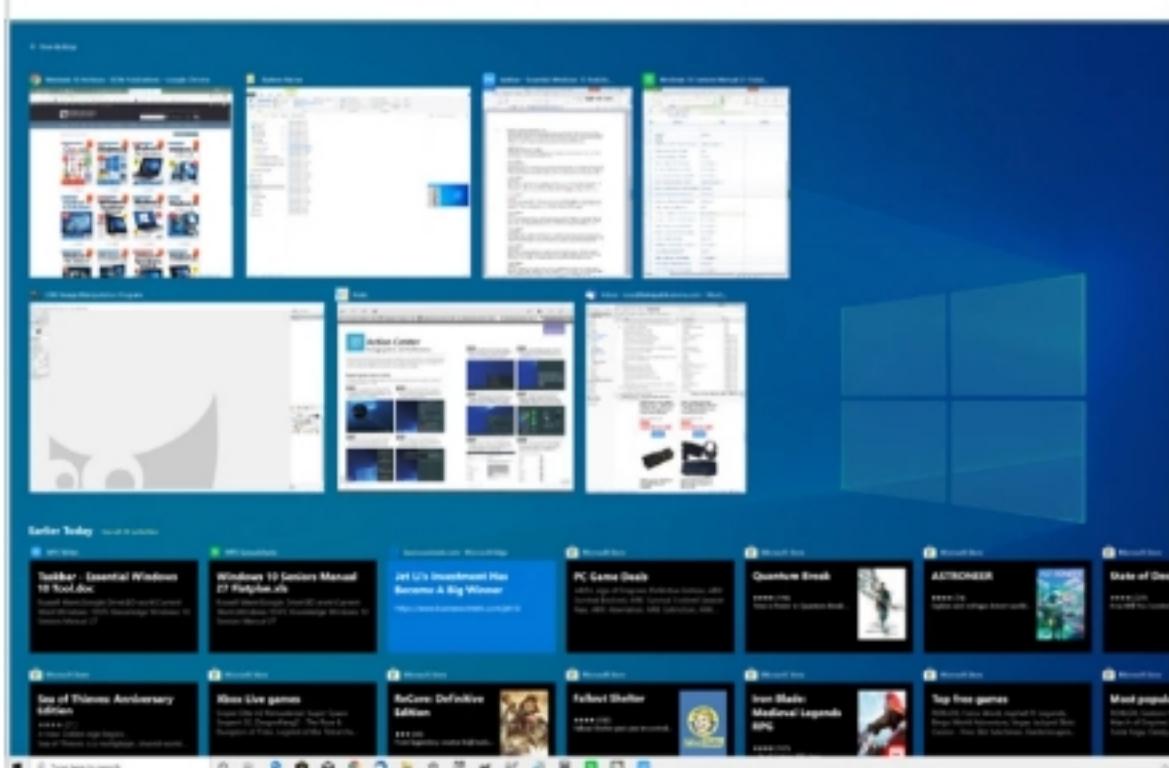
Step 5 If you right-click on the actual Action Center button in the taskbar, you will see some different options in the action menu that appears. These include the option to turn on Quiet hours, show/hide app icons and show/hide the number of notifications on the button.

Step 6 In addition to being displayed in the Action Center, notifications will create a pop-up window that appears at the bottom right of your screen. Clicking on these pop-up windows will also take you to the app that generated the notification (the Calendar app for example).

**Step 7** When you're done with the notifications on the menu, you can click the Clear All button at the top to dismiss them. In Settings > System > Notifications and Actions, you can choose the Quick Actions that appear at the top of the bottom panel in the Action Center.

Step 8 A very useful addition to the Action Center is the Quick actions panel at the bottom. This allows you to quickly perform some key functions (or actions) such as connecting to Wi-Fi. You can expand or collapse this bar by clicking the relevant heading.

Step 9 The Quick actions panel contains the Tablet mode button. Tablet mode automatically prepares the desktop for use with a touchscreen and your fingers; perfect if using Windows 10 on a touchscreen laptop or tablet. Upon activation you will notice an instant change.

Step 10 Whether you are on a Windows tablet or a laptop, at some point you will probably need to shut down the Wi-Fi and Bluetooth (on an aircraft for example). Clicking Flight mode halts all wireless communication and places an aeroplane icon in your notifications area.
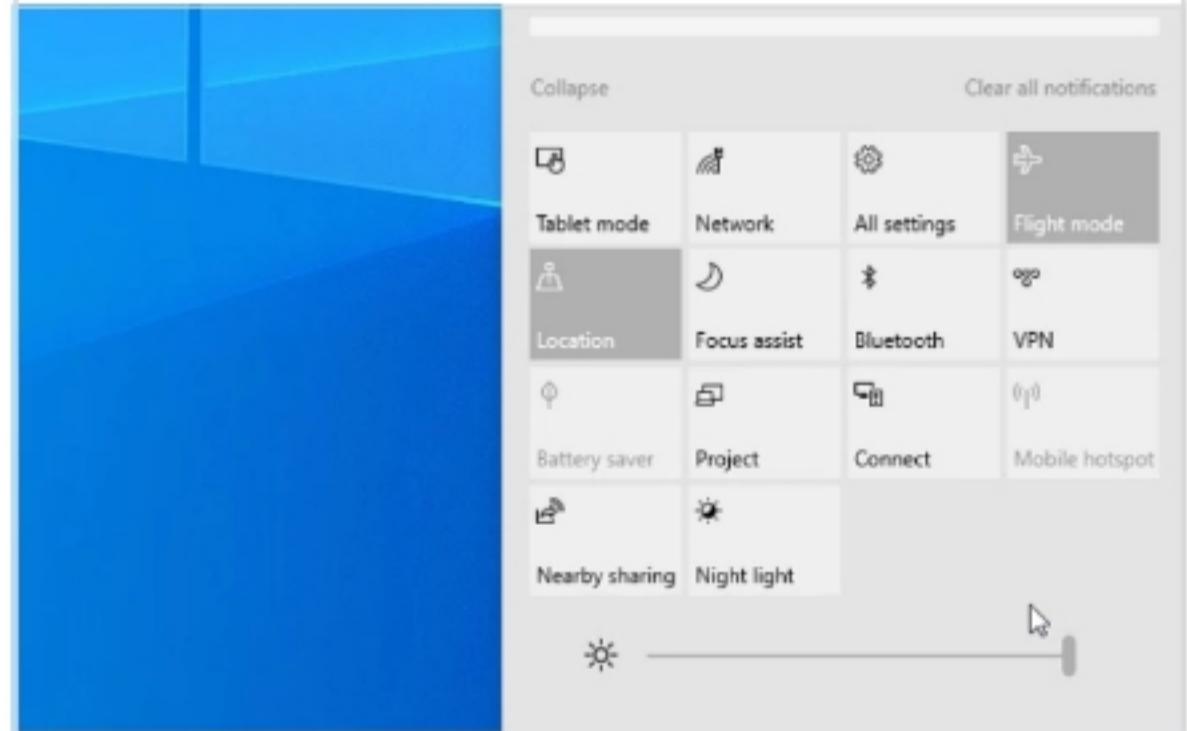
Managing Alerts and Notifications

There have always been pop-up messages in Windows but now there is a centralised way in which these are viewed and interacted with. Called the Action Center, it is designed to work more like the notifications panel on a smartphone or tablet.

Exploring the Action Center

The new Action Center is a key interface element in Windows 10, providing you with access to Quick actions buttons as well as the notifications and alerts.

Step 1 You can open the Action Center by clicking the speech bubble icon on the far-right of the taskbar or by pressing the Windows Key + A on your keyboard. If you hover the mouse pointer over the Action Center button, it will tell you if you have any new notifications.
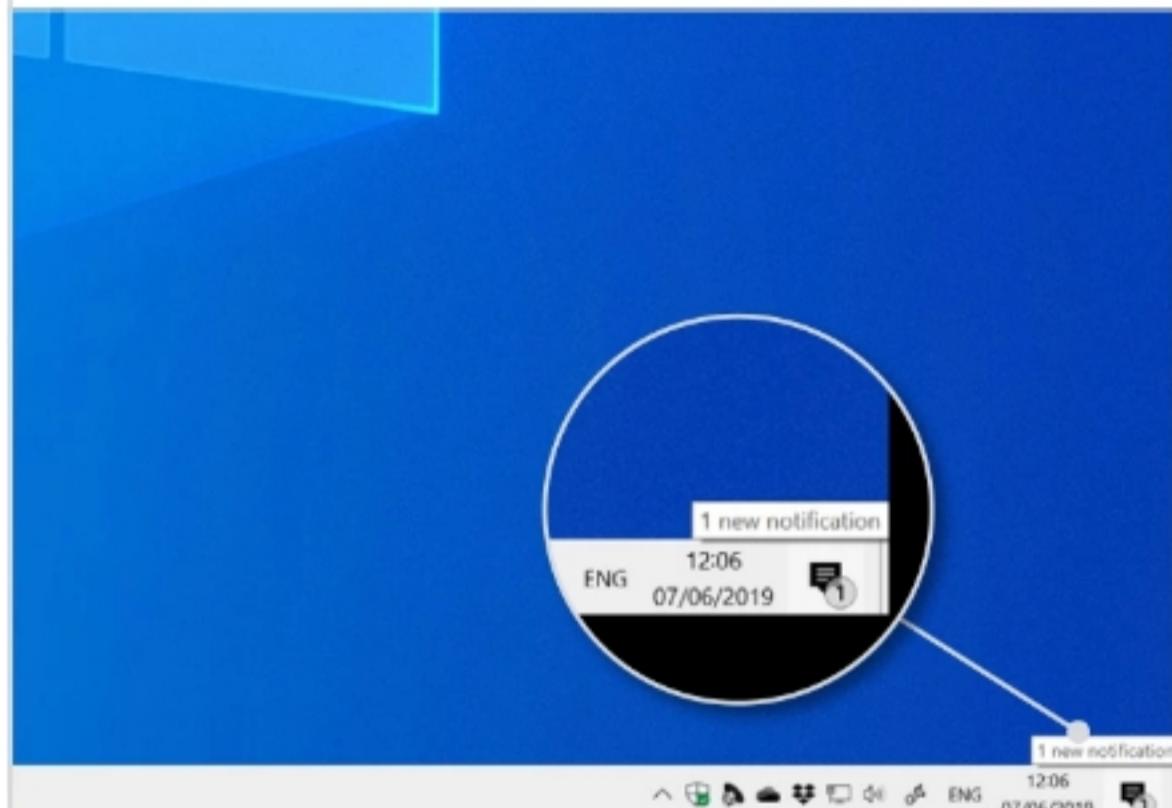
Step 3 Clicking on a notification will take you to the app that generated it. You can also interact with certain notifications within the Action Center panel. On this screen, you can see that the Calendar notification allows you to snooze it for various lengths of time.
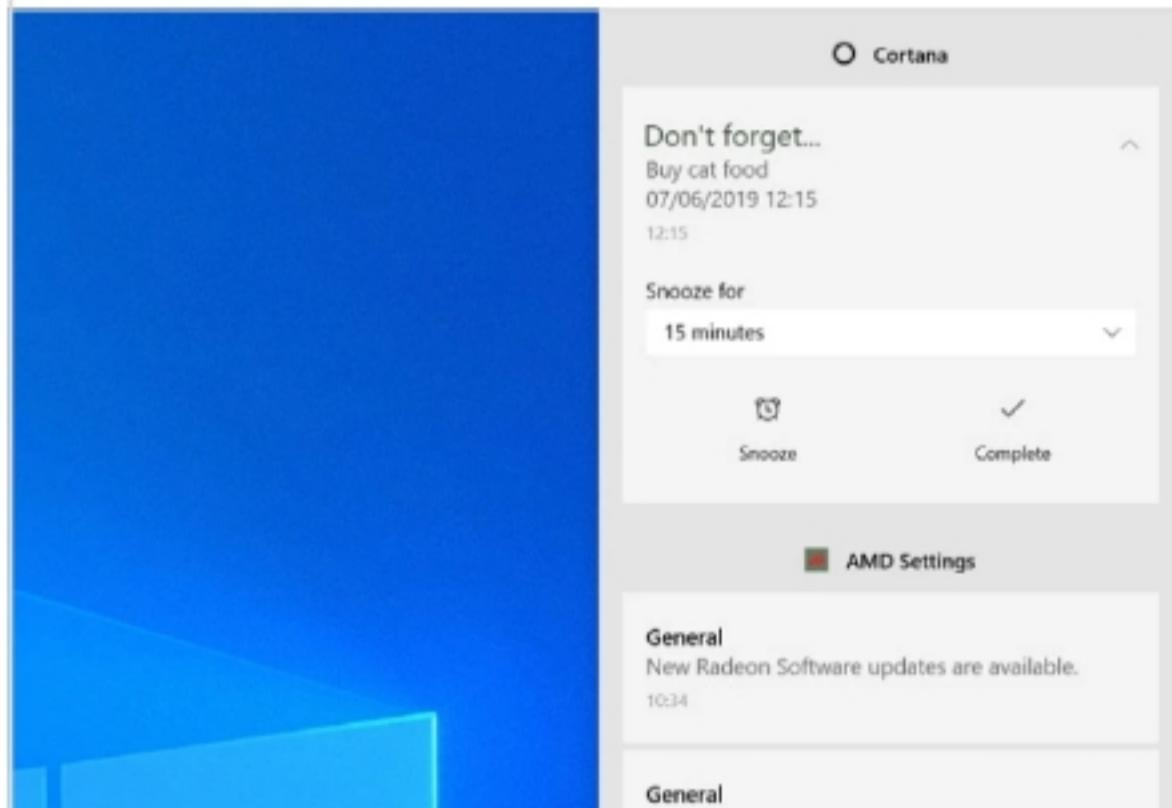
Step 2 This is what the Action Center looks like when you click the button. Any notifications are grouped by app, with a heading showing which app they are from. Notifications will remain in the panel until you actively dismiss them or action them (click through to the apps).
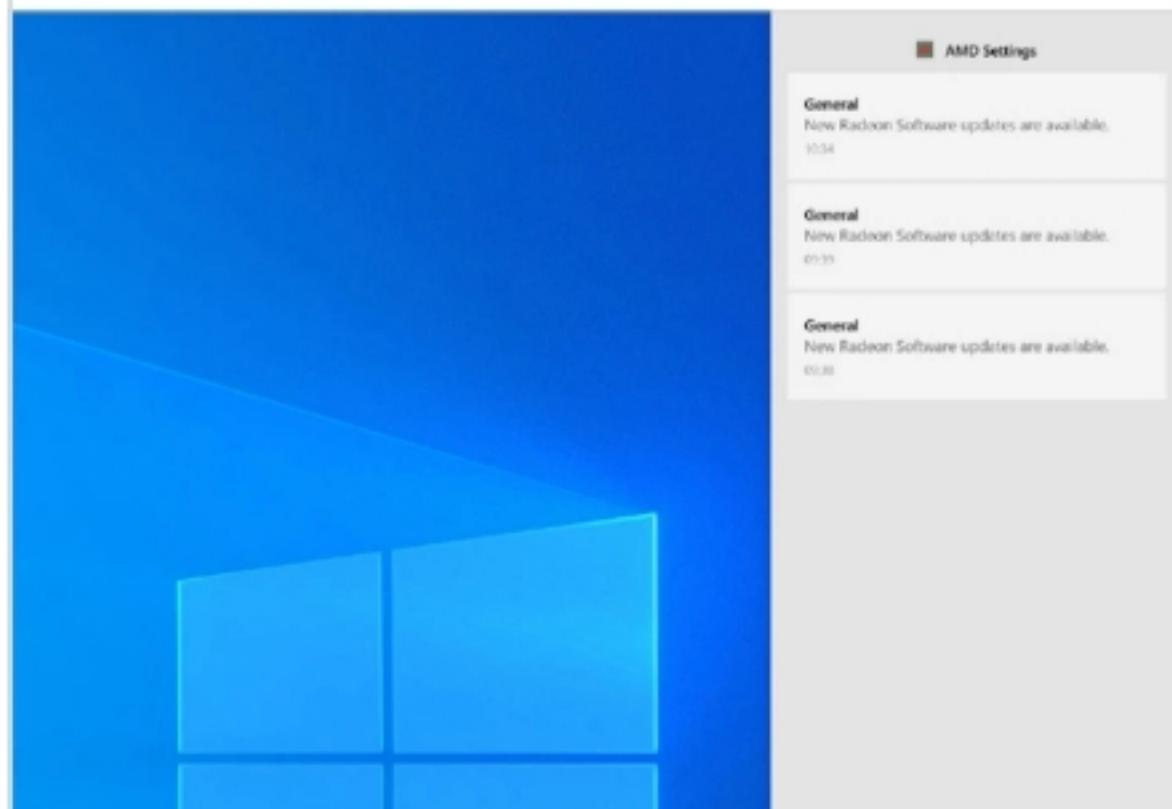
Step 4 You can also control whether or not an app sends notifications, or whether notifications are prioritised, from within the panel. Right-click on the app heading when a notification arrives and choose the desired option from the action menu that appears.
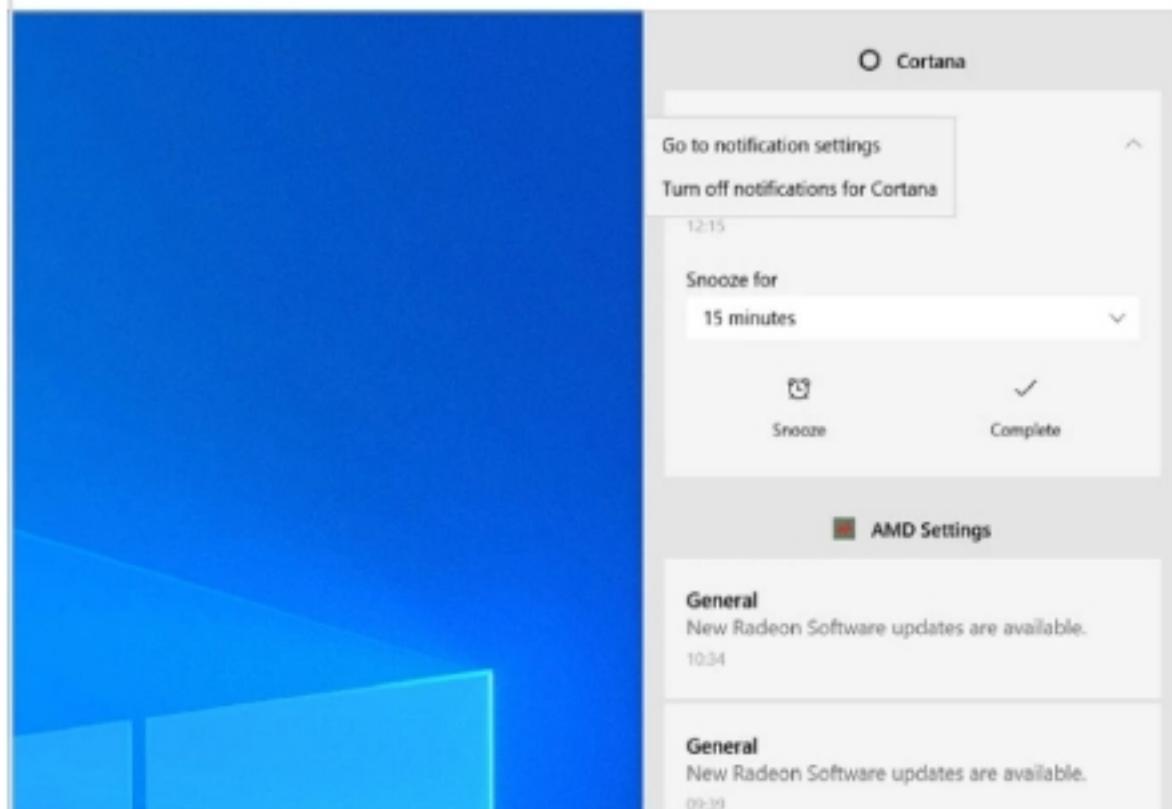
Step 5 The Start menu now allows for the creation of folders. This means that you can further organise the menu by keeping related app icons in a single place. To create a folder, simply click and drag an app icon over another. The icon beneath will expand slightly. Drop the dragged icon and the folder is created.
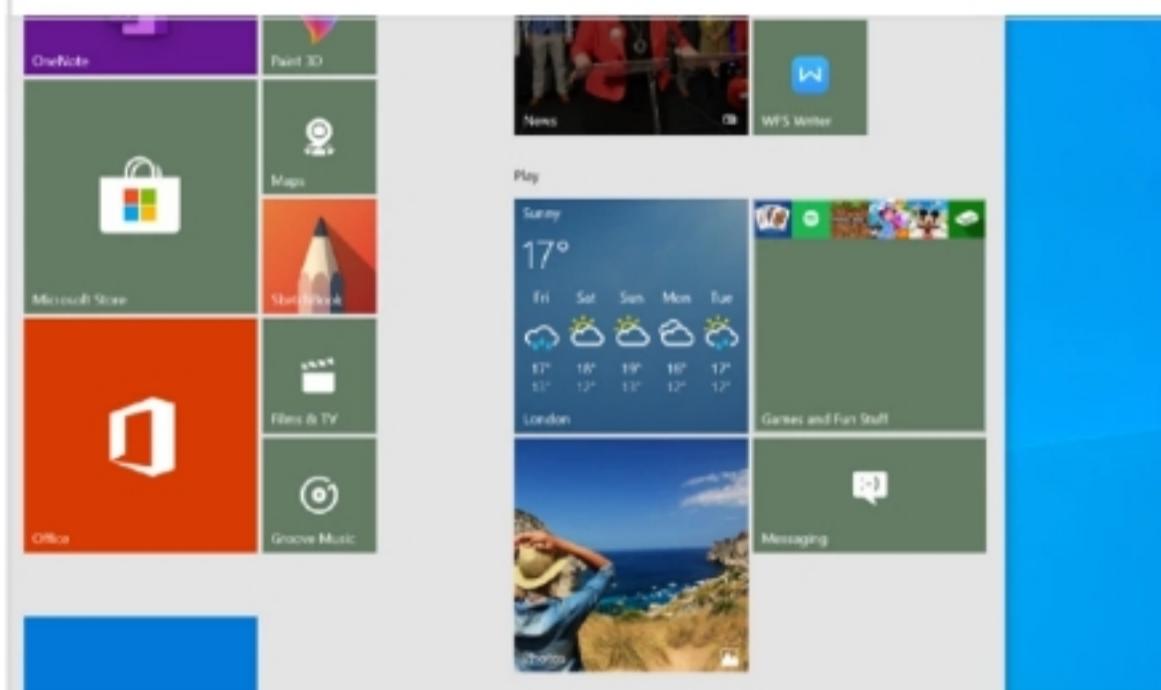
Step 6 On the left-hand side at the bottom, there's a list of key items, such as the Settings app and a shortcut to the File Explorer. Click the power icon and you can shut down or restart your PC. You can add more options to this shortcut section in Settings > Personalisation > Start > Choose which folders appear.
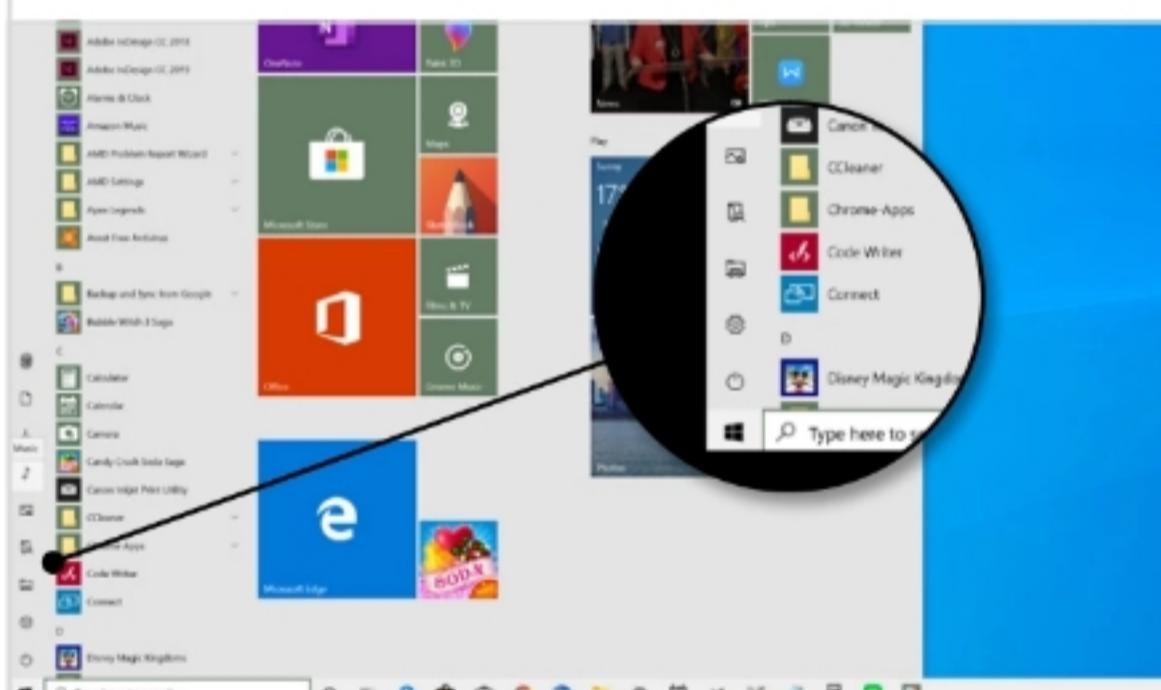
Step 7 The final area of the Start menu is the apps and software list. This displays all of the installed apps and software on your computer (software which doesn't require installation to run won't be shown here). Scroll up and down to view the full list and click the arrow next to apps to see more options.
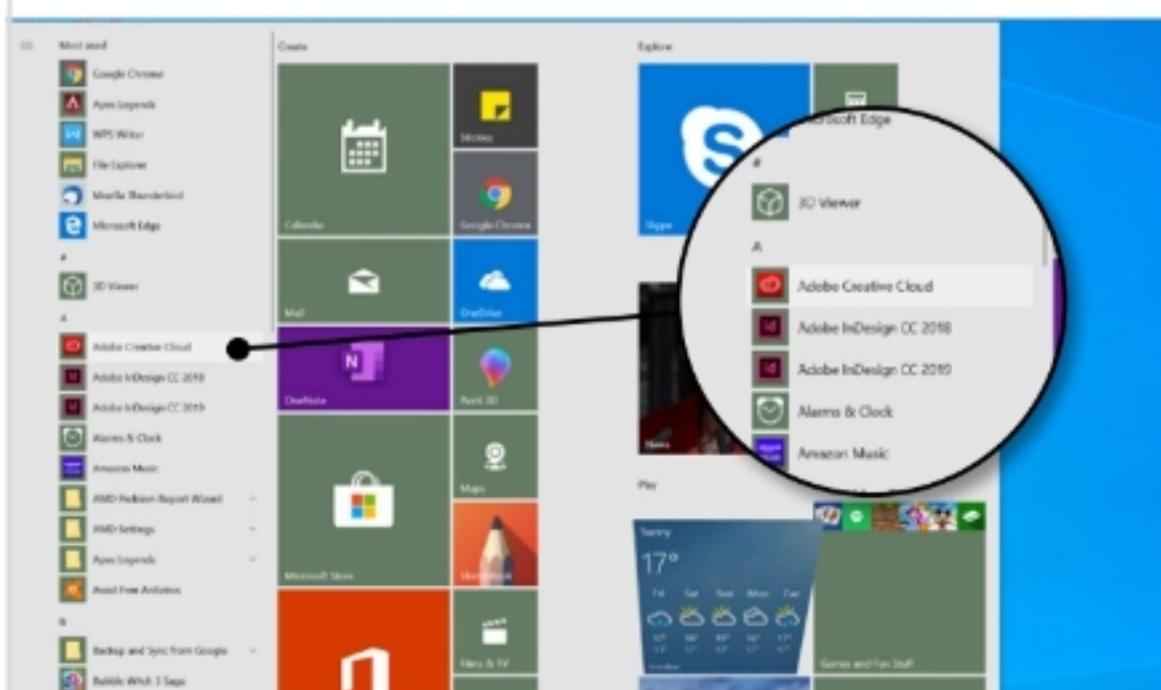
Step 8 The Most Used section at the top of the list enables you to access recently opened programs. This will also show recently opened files, so if you have Microsoft Word installed, simply go to the menu next to the icon in the most used apps menu and you can instantly open your recently worked upon files.
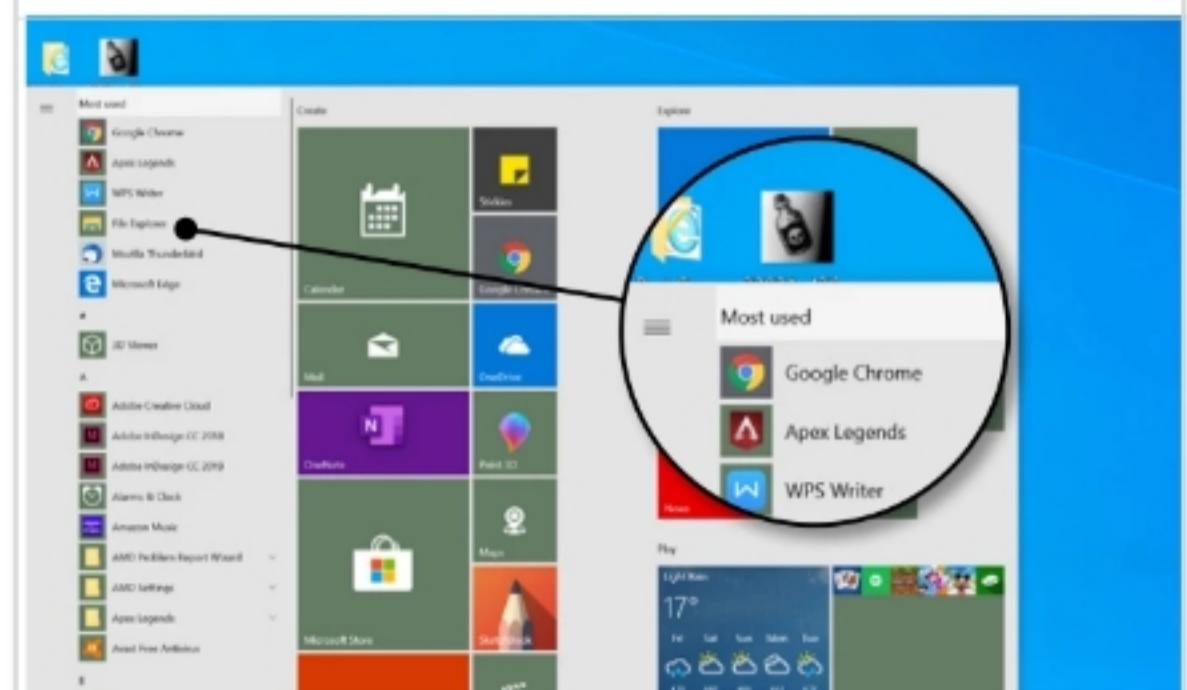
Step 9 Clicking on any of the headings (including the individual letters) of the apps list will open an A-Z selection menu. You can then quickly click on any of the letters to skip directly to the listed apps that begin with that letter, rather than having to scroll down through the entire thing.
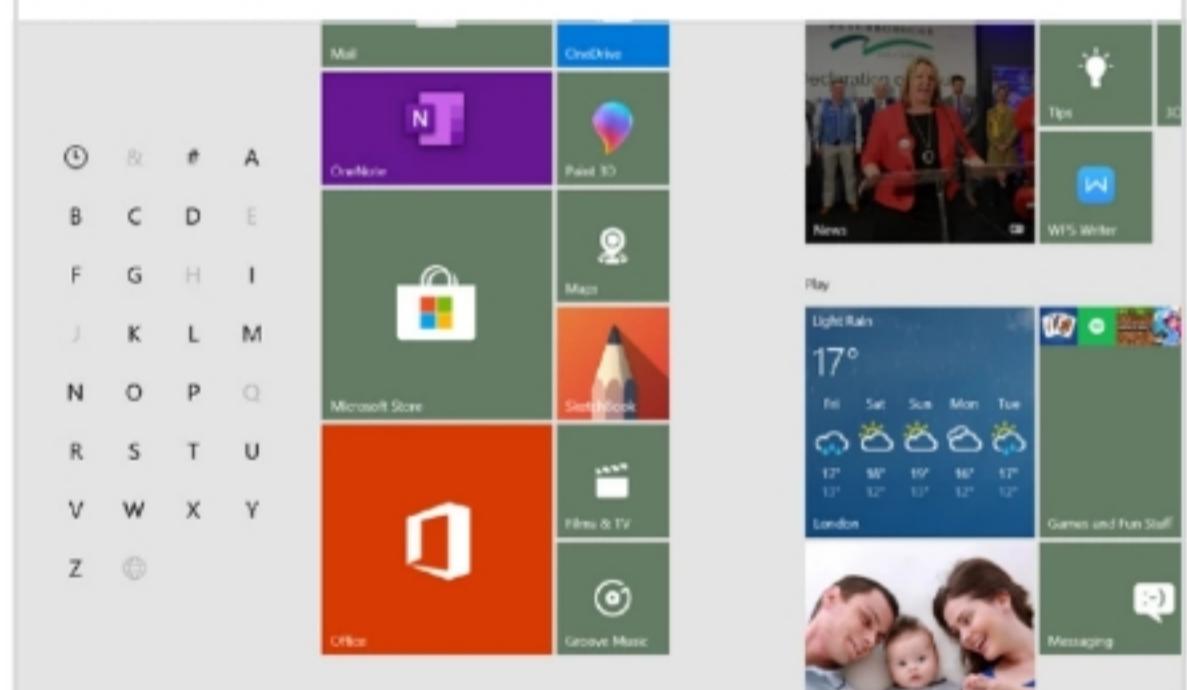
Step 10 Finally, Windows 10 also makes it easy to resize the Start menu. Move the mouse to the edges and resize handles will appear, so you can have it covering half your screen or a much smaller proportion. You can even set the Start menu to open full screen, by going to Settings > Personalisation > Start.
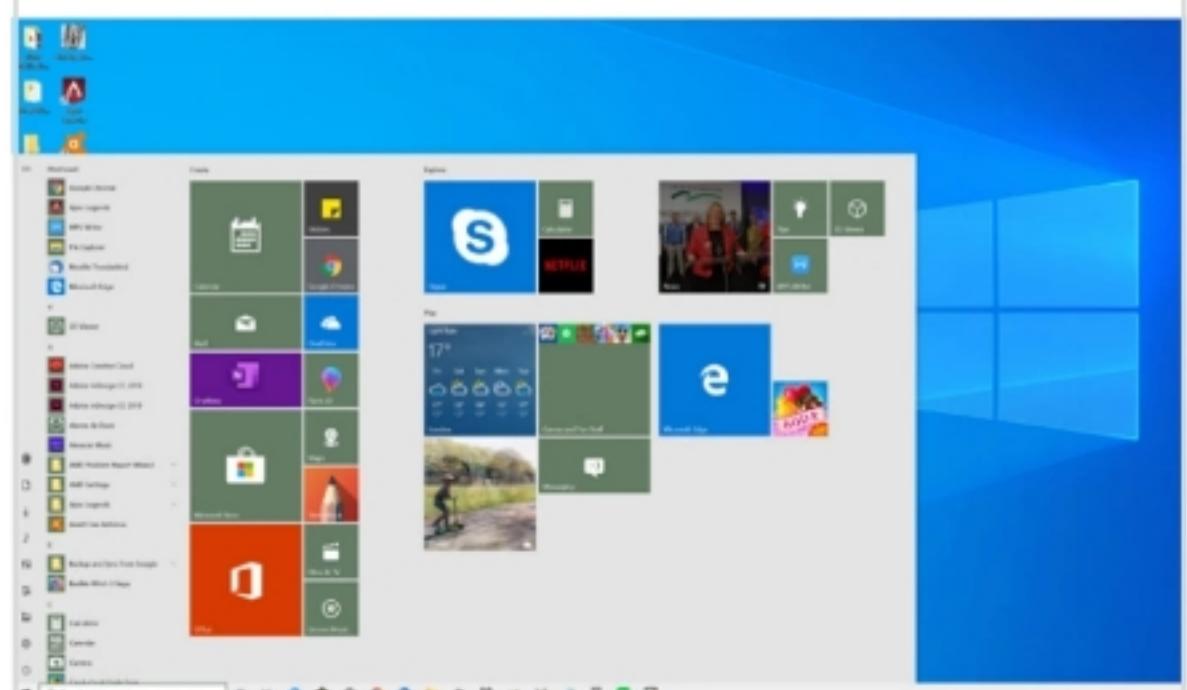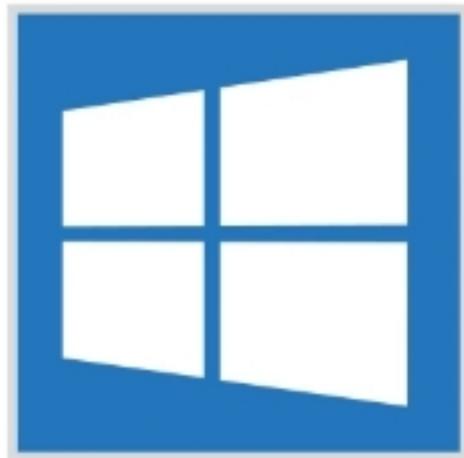
Using the Main Windows 10 Menu

The Start menu in Windows 10 is useful for much more than just displaying a list of your apps and software. It includes Live Tiles, shortcuts to folders and settings, and you can even create folders within the menu itself. Learning how to use the Start menu is a must.

Get to Grips with Start

Microsoft has completely redesigned the Start menu for a new era and it seems to be improved with every update to the OS, so it takes a little getting used to at first. Here's our tour of the new Start.

Step 1 You open the Start menu by clicking the Windows icon in the bottom left of the desktop or by pressing the Windows Key on your keyboard. The menu in Windows 10 is a mix of the Windows 7 and 8 styles but works better than either, with a list of apps on the left and Live Tiles on the right.

**Step 2** The live tiles work in the same way as they did in Windows 8. You can drag any of them around the menu should you wish to reorder them. You can right-click any file, folder or app in Windows 10 and select Pin to Start to include it here. Once in the menu, click and drag to rearrange tiles.

Step 3 You can right-click anything in the live tiles area of the Start menu to bring up the tile menu. This lets you resize, unpin and even turn the live tile into a static tile. There are up to four different sizes of live tile: small, medium, wide and large, giving you lots of ways to build the perfect Start menu.
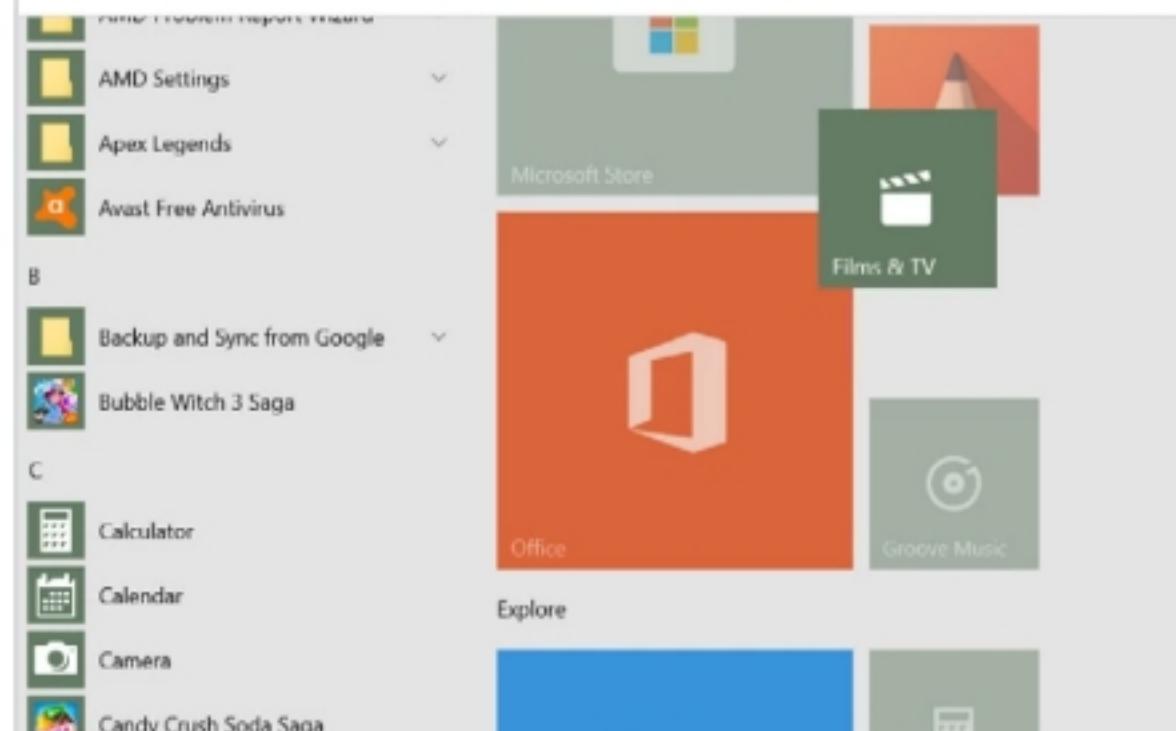
Step 4 The tiles are split into groups. You can click the headings on existing groups to rename them. Dragging one of the tiles to the bottom of the menu, to an unused area of the menu, enables you to create a new group. A bar will appear at the bottom to indicate that a new group will be created.
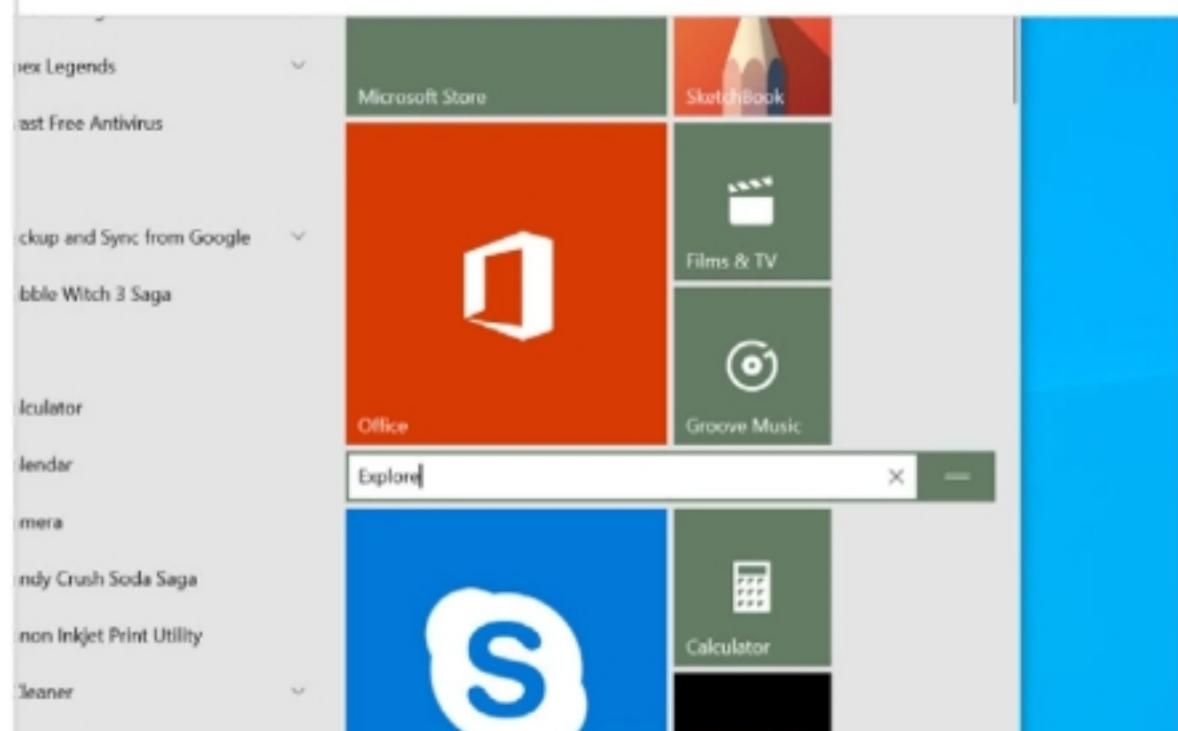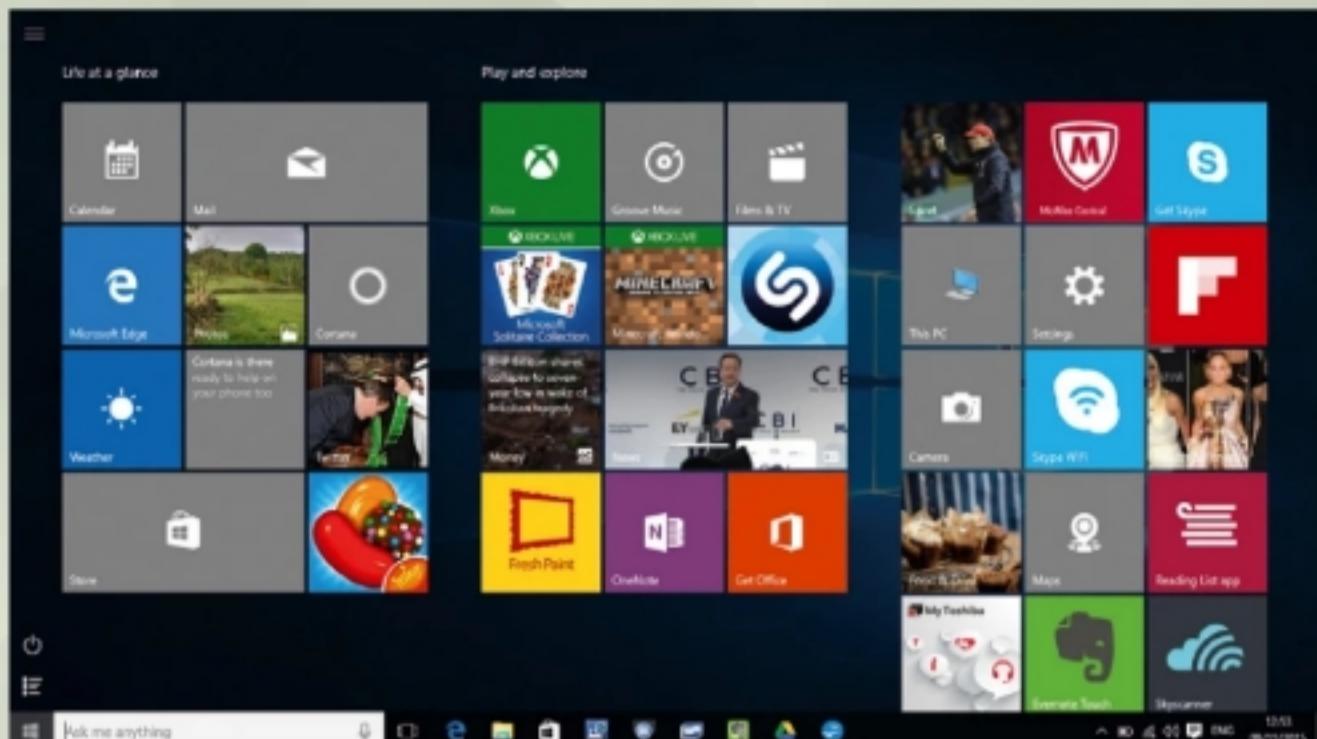
PERSONALISATION

You can personalise the Start menu and taskbar in a number of ways. Open the main settings and click on Personalisation. In the Start section you will see sliders to control whether you see recently added apps, most used apps, etc. You can also set the Start menu to display in full screen like it did in Windows 8.1.

Action Center Notifications

Notifications in the Action Center range from security alerts and system errors, to emails and Facebook updates. If you are seeing notifications here that you don't need, Twitter updates for example, you can right-click the heading and turn off notifications for that app.

Start Menu Tiles

Just as with Windows 8.1, the tiles that appear in the Start menu display information (when appropriate) from the apps and services they link to. You can customise the look of the tiles by right-clicking on them and selecting an option from the menu that appears. Tiles are now automatically split into relevant sections, e.g. Play and Explore.

Quick Settings

The Quick Settings displayed here will vary depending on the device you are using. You will normally see Wi-Fi, Note, All Settings, Bluetooth, Location and Quiet Hours here at the very least. If the Quick Settings menu is collapsed, click the Expand button to show the full menu. You can now customise the Quick Settings buttons shown in Settings > System > Notifications and Actions.

Taskbar (right)

The right-hand side of the taskbar contains several essential Windows tools. Here you can check battery power (if using a laptop), your Wi-Fi connection details, speaker volume and several other things. You will also find the button to open the new Action Center here. The Anniversary update added notification badges here, so you can see unread notification amounts at a glance.
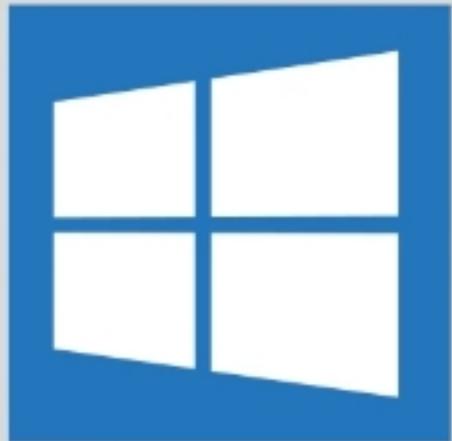
Discover the Start Menu, Taskbar and Action Center

The Start menu, taskbar and Action Center are likely to be three of the most used areas of the Windows 10 interface for most people. There have been several additions and improvements to these tools in the recent updates, making them even easier to use, so let's take a look at what you can do with these essential Windows tools.

All Apps List

As you use Windows 10 and the various apps and software, a list of your most used tools will appear here. This is constantly updated as your use of the OS evolves. At the top of the All Apps list is a Recently Added section, showing newly installed software and a Most Used section showing your favourite applications. Click either heading to open a jump to letter menu.

Start Menu Folders

If you pin apps to the Start menu, their icons will appear below the block of tiles. You can now move these app icons into folders within the Start menu. To do this, click and drag one icon on top of another. If the bottom icon expands slightly rather than moving out of the way, drop the icon to create the folder.

System Folders

You can change the folders that appear in the bottom half of the Start menu, depending on how you use Windows 10. Settings, Power and All Apps will always be present in this part of the menu but everything else can be chosen in Settings > Personalisation.

Search Bar

The search bar is always visible to the right of the Windows button, unless viewing an app or game in full screen mode. Click in the Ask me Anything box and the search window will open. You can either type your search term or, if set up, use the Mic to ask Cortana. When the search menu opens, it will hopefully be prefilled with relevant information and links.
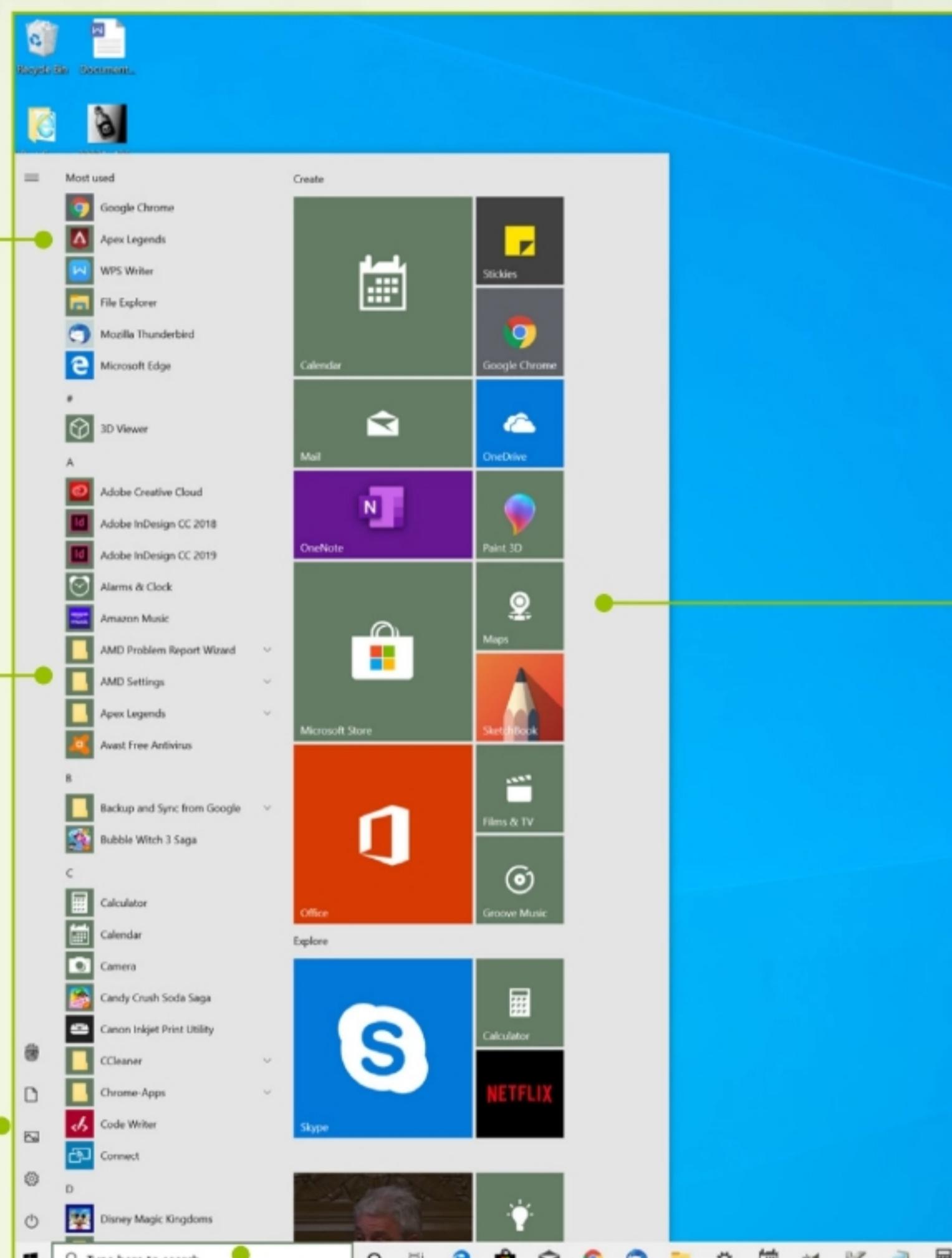
Taskbar (left)

The taskbar contains shortcuts to many of the most commonly used apps, including the Edge browser, App Store and File Explorer. You can add any app to the taskbar by right-clicking on the tile or app icon and selecting Pin to taskbar from the menu. Right-clicking on the taskbar will also allow you to add different toolbars to it.

Phone Sync Settings

A new addition with the Fall Creators update is the ability to link your Windows, Android or iOS phone to your PC and share documents, files and data more easily between them more easily. This section of the settings lets you set up the phone sync, and manage it afterwards.

Network & Internet Settings

If you are having problems with your Internet connection, this is where you should come to find details and information. Everything from Internet options to flight mode and firewall settings can be found here. Each section contains links to more advanced options.

Personalisation Settings

Nearly everything about the way Windows looks can be customised to some degree. Personalisation settings include options for changing the desktop wallpaper, colours of menus and windows, lock screen settings and the theme management tools.

Ease of Access Settings

Previously called Accessibility, if you have additional accessibility needs to use a computer efficiently, you can find lots of settings here to make life easier. From a narrator tool and screen magnifier, to closed captioning and mouse and keyboard settings. You can even make the cursor thicker and easier to see.

Windows Settings

tting

Phone
Link your Android, iPhone

Network & Internet
WiFi, flight mode, VPN

Personalisation
Background, lock screen, colours

Time & Language
Speech, region, date

Gaming
Game bar, captures, broadcasting, Game Mode

Ease of Access
Narrator, magnifier, high contrast

Privacy
Location, camera, microphone

Update & Security
Windows Update, recovery, backup

Gaming Settings

A new addition to the settings with the recent update, here you will find the newly added gaming tools. These include a game recorder (Game DVR), the tools for broadcasting your games and the Game Mode option. This helps to optimise any games you play on your PC.

Update and Security Settings

It is important to make sure that your Windows computer is up-to-date with all the latest updates and revisions. Within this settings menu, you can check to see which updates are available to download and install. You can also create backups and recovery discs here.

Privacy Settings

The privacy settings contains sections for all of the main areas where your privacy may be compromised, including some which might not be obvious at first. Click on each of the section headings to see additional settings and options.

Time & Language Settings

In addition to the obvious settings for the time and date displayed on your computer (having this information correct is more important than many think) this is where you come to change the display and input language for your computer.

Exploring the Windows 10 Settings

Windows 10 settings are actually spread across a couple of different menus but the main settings can be accessed by clicking the Start menu button, where you should see them pinned in the folder list. If not you can search for 'Settings' using the Windows 10 search bar. You can pin the settings icon to the taskbar or Start menu for easier access.

External Device Settings

This is where you come to manage all of your connected devices, from printers and scanners to your mouse and keyboard. Related settings are also found here, including Bluetooth and touchpad settings if you are using a laptop.

Main System Setting

Here you can find settings and options for things like the Display, Notifications, Apps, Power and Storage. The About section contains lots of information about the hardware in your computer as well as the operating system software version being used.

App Settings

This is where you can find details on all of the apps you have installed on your Windows 10 computer. The main list shows you the name, file size, developer and the date it was installed (or updated). You can also set app preferences here, so which apps are used to complete certain tasks.

Search

Now that search and Cortana have been split apart, there is a new group of settings for search. Here you can control Safe Search settings, cloud search content, and your search history. You can also control what is searched (all files, or just libraries and desktop).

Settings

Find a se

System
Display, sound, notifications, power

Devices
Bluetooth, printers, mouse

Apps
Uninstall, defaults, optional features

Accounts
Your accounts, email, sync, work, family

Search
Find my files, permissions

Cortana
Cortana language, permissions, notifications

Cortana Settings

Since the Fall Creators update you can access the Cortana settings through the main settings panel, rather than just through the Cortana sidebar. There are some new settings to find here since the update, including the ability to manage cloud search options.

Account Settings

Account settings contains all of the options you need for managing your local Microsoft account. This includes the secure sign-in options such as password, PIN and picture password, as well as the new Dynamic Lock settings, workplace or school access settings and Microsoft Family settings.

Step 5 Click the Add a Child option in the new account window and enter their email in the text box section below. When you're ready, click on the Next button.

Microsoft account ✕

Add a child or an adult?

Enter the email address of the person you want to add. If they use Windows, Office, Outlook.com, OneDrive, Skype, or Xbox, enter the email address they use to sign in.

◉ Add a child

Kids are safer online when they have their own account

◯ Add an adult

anon.child.2000@mail.com ✕

The person I want to add doesn't have an email address

Step 6 You'll now get the message that it's not a Microsoft account, click the link to Create a Microsoft Account. This will bring you to a new window with the email address you've entered already filled in. Complete the relevant details and click the Next button to continue.

Let's create an account

Windows, Office, Outlook.com, OneDrive, Skype, Xbox. They're all better and more personal when they sign in with their Microsoft account. Learn more

After you sign up, we'll send you a message with a link to verify this user name.

anon.child.2000@mail.com

Get a new email address

••••••••

United Kingdom

January | 6 | 2000

Step 7 The next section details what level of search and advertising Microsoft will allow to the account. Obviously you can untick both boxes, or leave them as they are, depending on what you want. However, for the sake of enhanced privacy, we recommend unticking both. Click Next when you're ready.

See what's most relevant to them

Make sure they see the search results, advertising, and things they'll like most when Microsoft personalizes their experiences by using their preferences and learning from their data. Change these settings online and in some Microsoft products and services.

☑ Enhance their online experiences by letting Microsoft Advertising use their account information. (They can change this setting at any time.)

☑ Send them promotional offers from Microsoft. (They can unsubscribe at any time.)

Step 8 The child's account is now ready to be activated. The message box informs you that you'll need to respond to the email Microsoft has sent before they're able to log in in to the Windows 10 computer. Click the Close button when you're ready.

Microsoft account ✕

Good to go!

You invited anon.child.2000@mail.com to be added to your family as a child. Until they accept the invite from their email, they'll be able to log into this device without family settings applied to their account.

Let them know they'll need to be connected to the internet the first time they log into the device.

Step 9 Microsoft will send some emails to the child's account. One will be a Verification email, which you, or your child, will need to click the link to activate the account. They need to log in to Microsoft online to complete the process. The other email will be an invitation to join the family account, which you also need to Accept.

Step 10 Using the child account to join the family will send emails to you confirming the accepted invitation. Back at the Windows 10 Family & Other People window, you can now click the child's account and allow it to log in; or manage it via the Microsoft Family portal online, which we'll look at in the next tutorial.
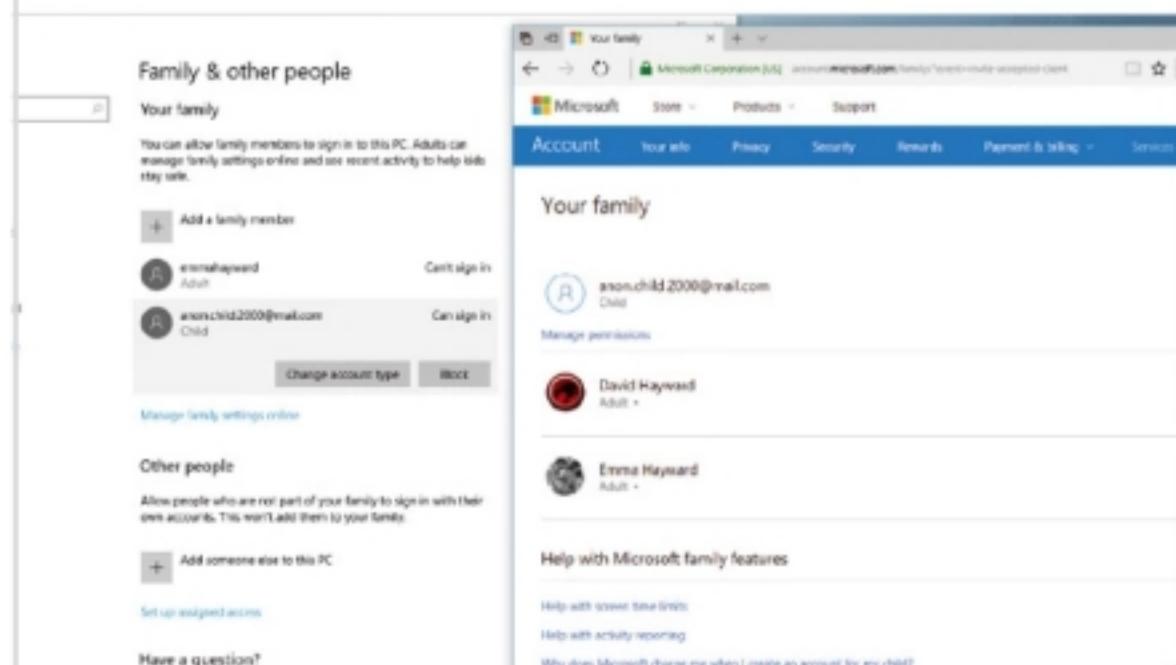
Setting Up Parental Controls

If you're sharing a Windows 10 computer with a child, or they have one for themselves, then setting them up with their own account can be helpful. A Windows 10 child account gives them freedom, whilst allowing you to set up certain restrictions.

Windows 10 Child Account

With a Windows 10 child account you're able to set up age restrictions and time limits and ensure they're not visiting sites or using apps they shouldn't.

Step 1 Start off by clicking the Windows Start button and typing 'account'. The first result that should appear is Manage your account, if anything else appears, as in you have some work labelled 'account' or such, then scroll down until you find the Manage your account option.

Step 2 You'll now find yourself at the Windows 10 Settings page, in the Accounts section portal. Notice there are links down the left-hand side, look for the Family & Other People link and click it to continue with the process.

Step 3 You'll need to sign in with a Microsoft account for this to work. If you've not already set up a main Microsoft login account for Windows, you'll need to click the Sign in with a Microsoft account option. Once done, you'll be presented with the current family members who already have MS accounts.
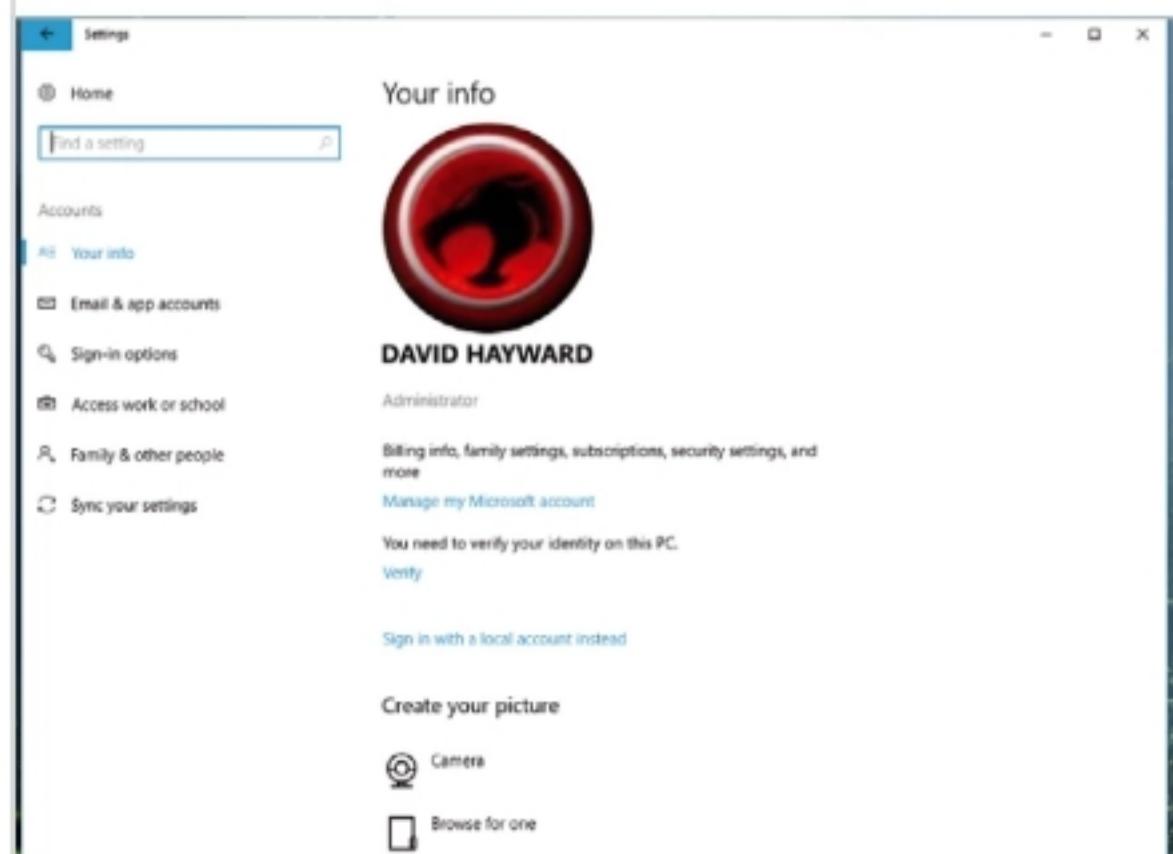
Step 4 Next, click on the Add a Family Member link, by the plus sign under the Your Family section. This will launch a new pop-up window to create a new Microsoft account. You need to make sure that your child has an email address and that you or they can currently access it to authenticate the process.
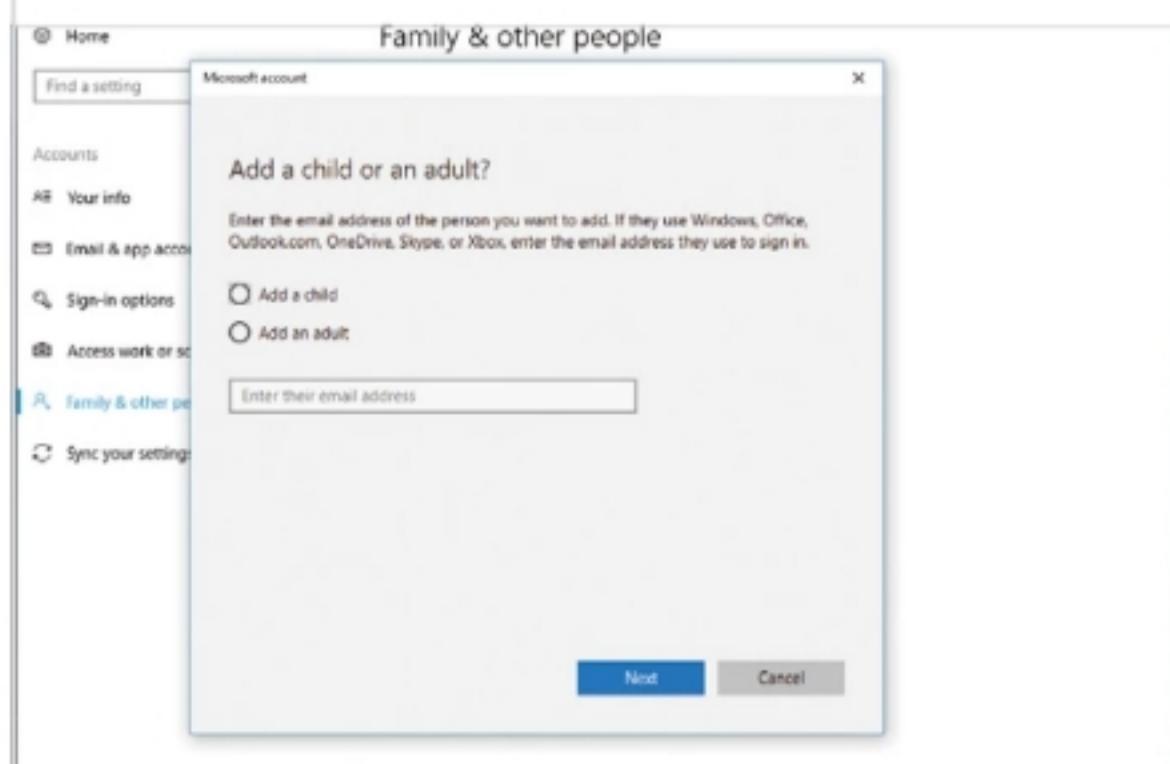
Step 5 During the initialisation process for Windows 10, you will be asked to sign in using your Microsoft account (you can also sign in with a Local Account). Microsoft will then go and fetch any information connected to your account, such as your profile picture, etc.

Make it yours

Your Microsoft account opens up a world of benefits. Sign in for your personalised experience. Learn more.

graham_daniels@outlook.com

•••••••••

Forgotten my password

No account? Create one.
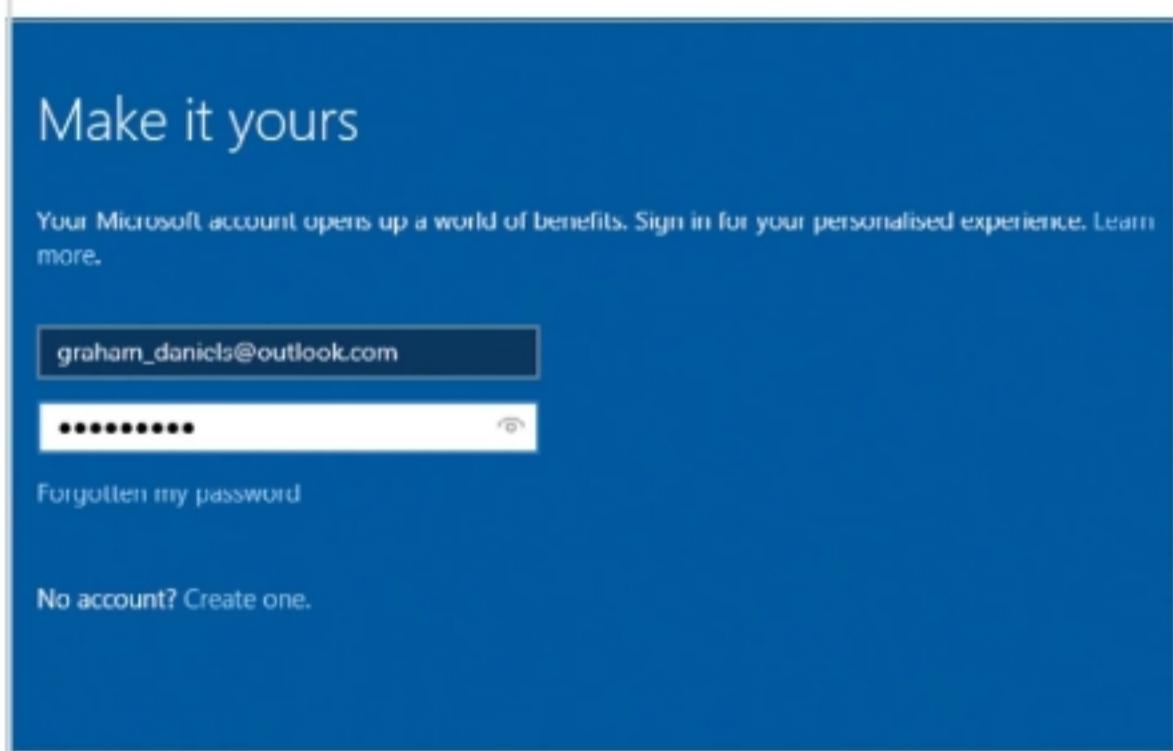
Step 6 Once you've signed in using your Microsoft account, you can configure it from within Windows 10. Open the main Settings and choose Accounts. You can change options to do with the account itself here as well as how often your computer should require you to sign in.
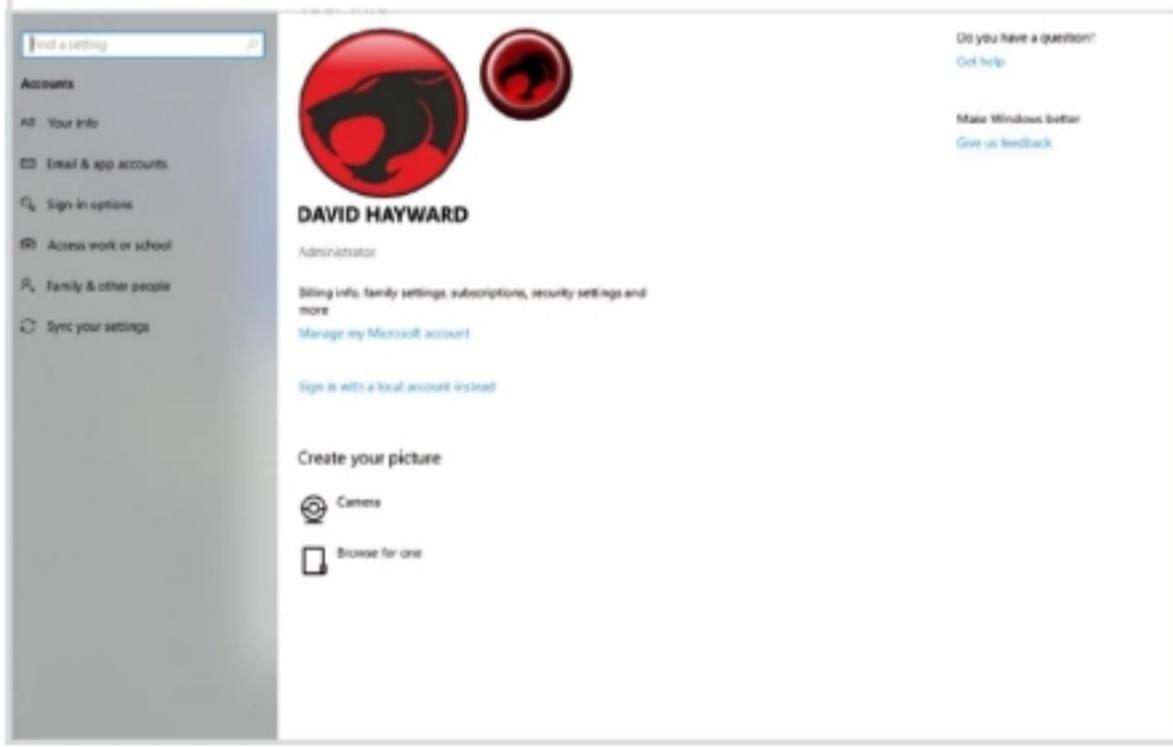
Step 7 Clicking Manage your Account will take you to your account page online. You may see an update to your account terms and conditions when you do this for the first time. Here you can see recent purchases, your devices, personal info (plus payment info) and change your password.
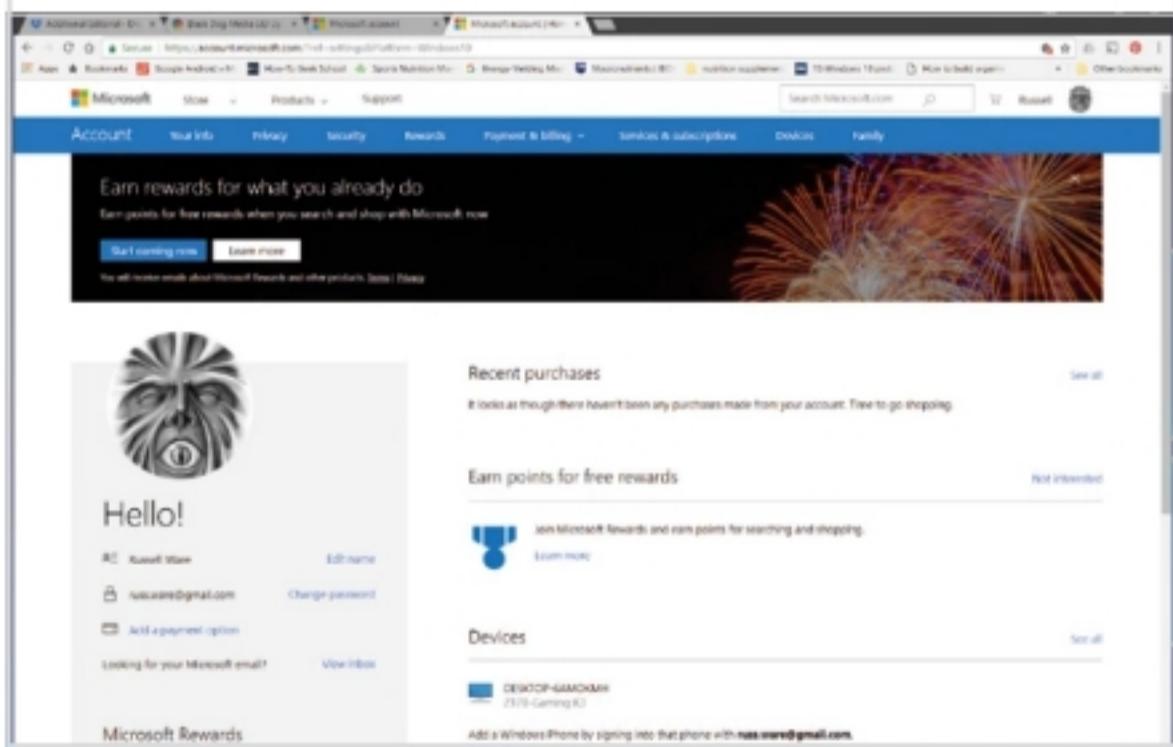
Step 8 Back in Settings > Accounts > Sync your Settings, you can tell your PC what details you want it to synchronise to your Microsoft account. Aside from several other options, you can choose whether you want your stored passwords to be synchronised using your account.
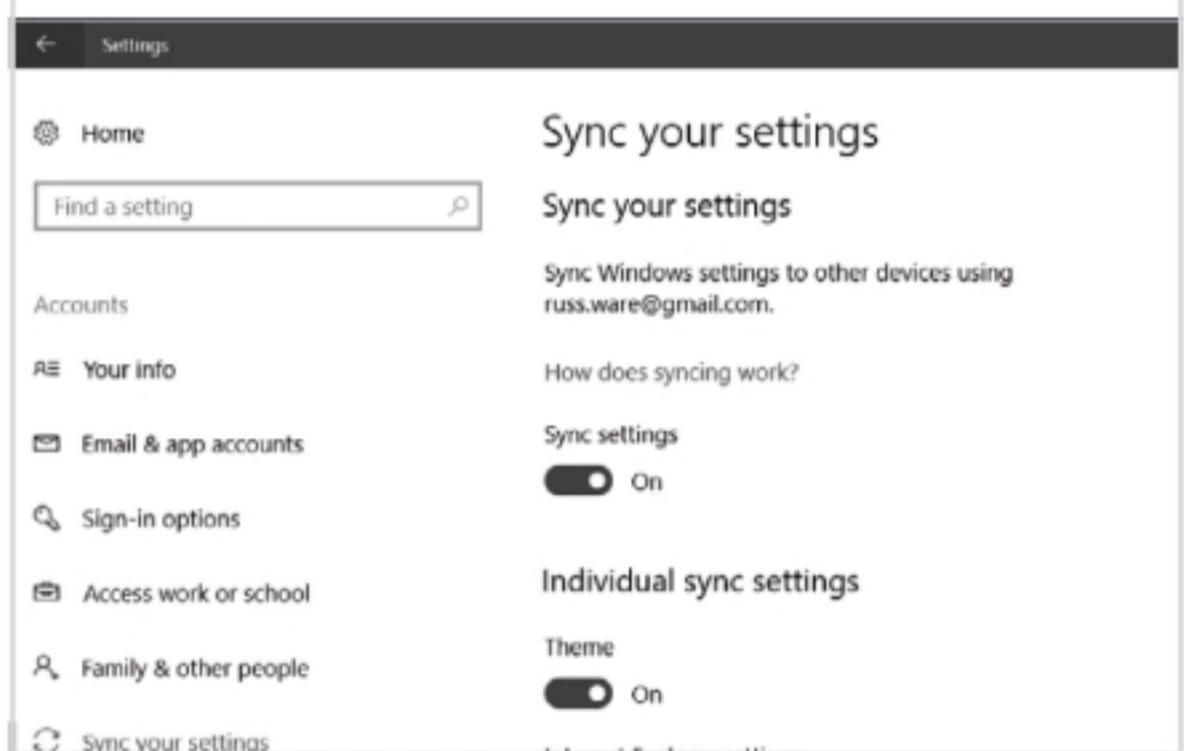
Step 9 Services within Windows that use your Microsoft account, such as Mail or the Windows Store, will now automatically have your account details pre-filled. You will be able to get access to your purchase history and more via the individual apps.
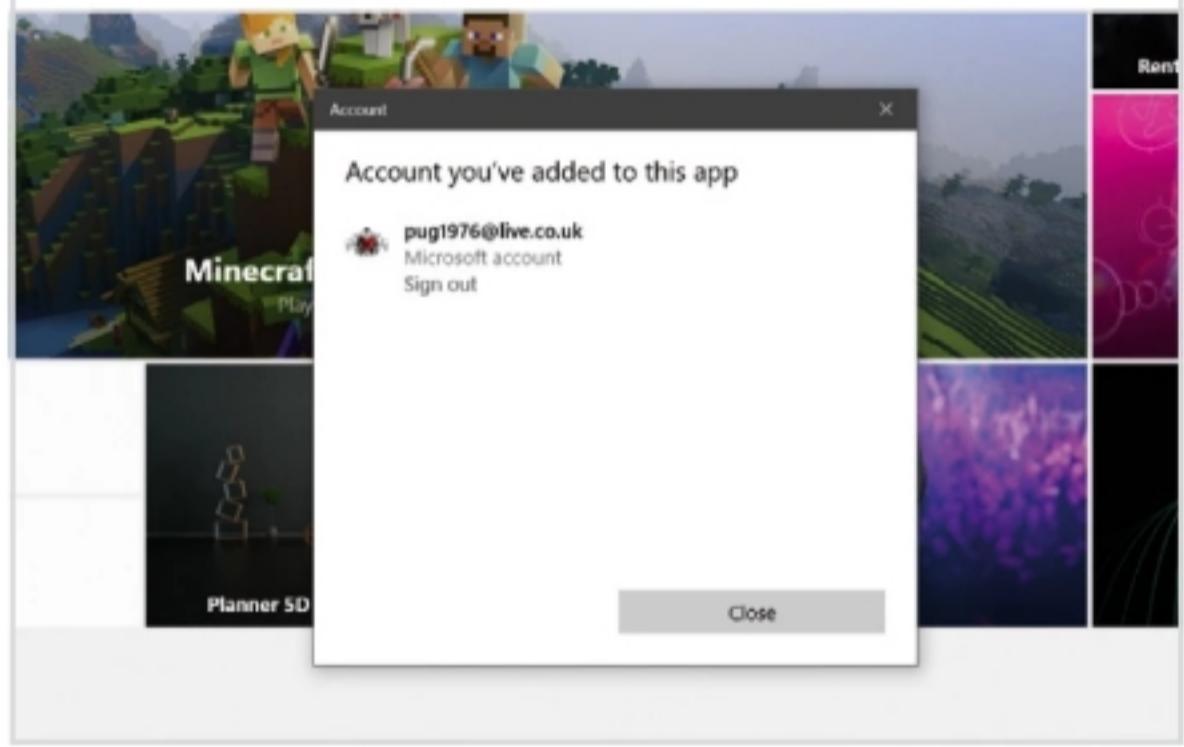
Step 10 Within Settings > Accounts you can also add family members to your PC, so they use their own login and don't have to share your account. You can specify time limits and restrict the type of games that can be played. You can even add people that aren't in your family group.
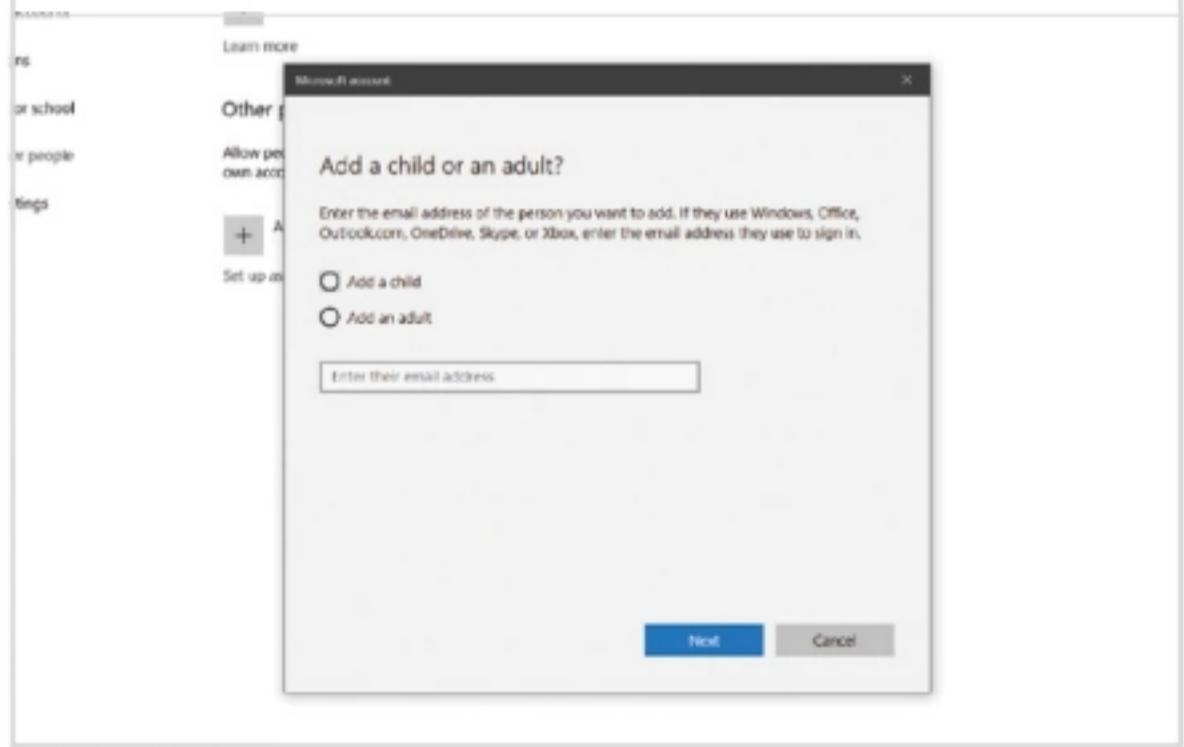
Setting Up a Microsoft Account

A Microsoft account is an important part of using Windows 10. It gives you single sign in access to all of the Microsoft and Windows 10 services, from Skype and Office to Outlook and the Store. Setting one up should be the first thing you do in Windows 10.

Set Up and Configure Your Account

Microsoft prefers its users to have a single main account. Here we show you how to create one as well as look at any other further settings you might need.

Step 1 You can sign up for an account when you install or initialise Windows 10 for the first time but you can also create one at www.account.microsoft. com. This is also where you can customise your account settings, which we'll come onto shortly.

Step 2 Even if you think you don't have a Microsoft account, it's quite possible that you do have one. Ever had a Hotmail or Outlook.com address, or did you use MSN or Windows Live Messenger? You can sign in with those same credentials.

Step 3 In addition to Windows and Outlook.com, you can also use your account across all Microsoft services including Xbox Live, Skype, Office and Bing, as well as Windows-powered phones (your Contacts are automatically synchronised with your account too).
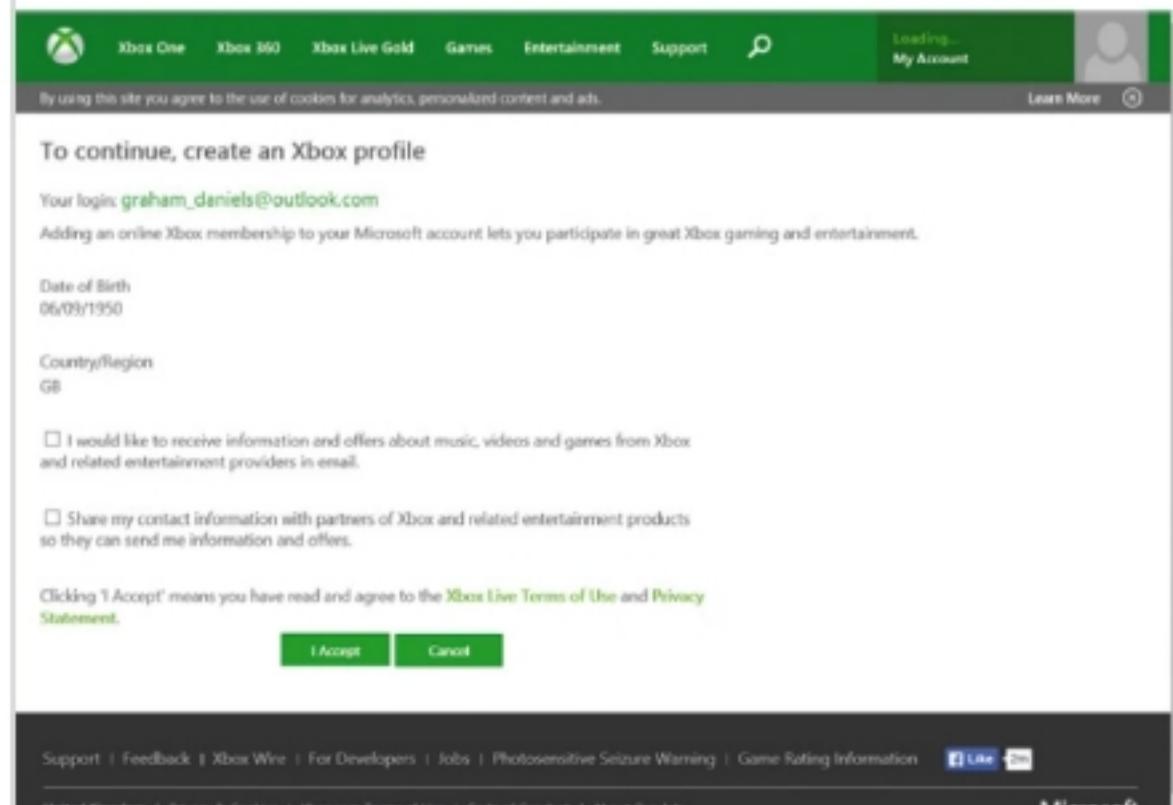
Step 4 You can create a Microsoft account with any email address (you used to have to have an Outlook or Windows Live account). So even if you use Gmail, you can still get a Microsoft account. It's optional whether you have a new Outlook.com email account as well.
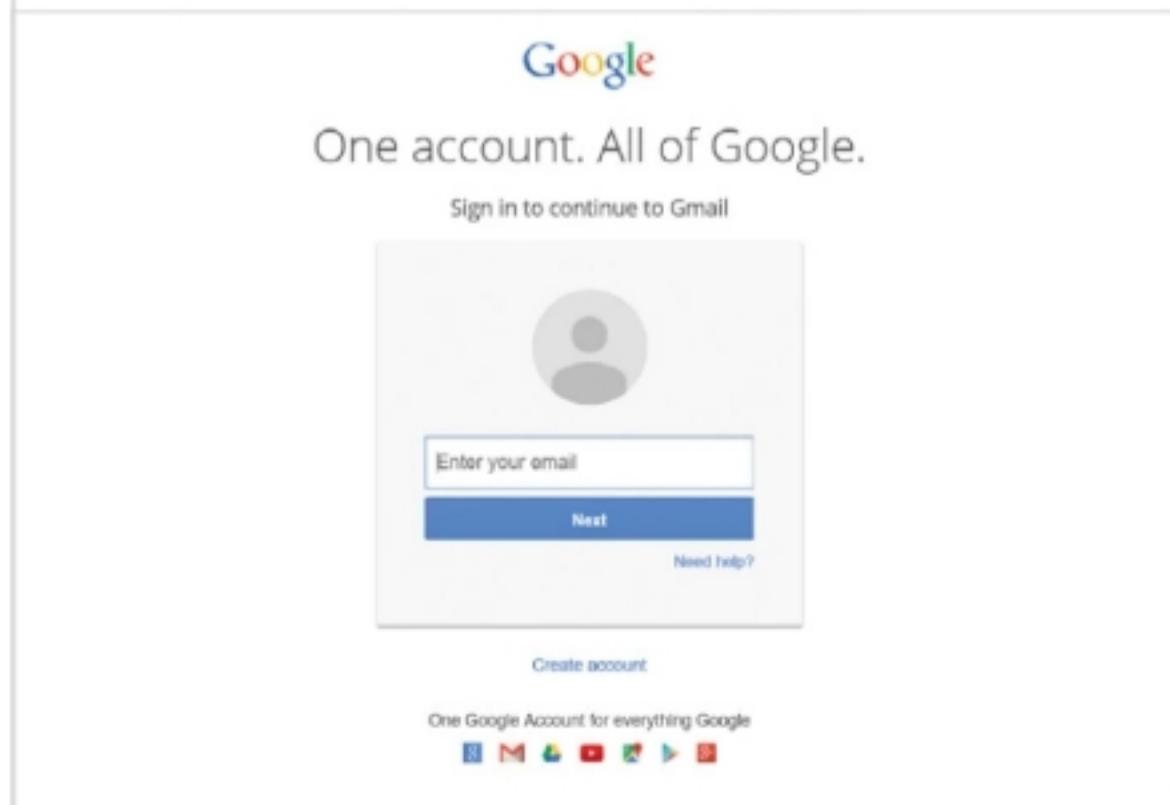
Windows 10 Essentials

Before you start exploring everything the new operating system has to offer, take some time to get things set up correctly and make sure that you understand how to navigate around the desktop. Here we take a look at the core elements of Windows 10 and how you can use them more efficiently.

Contents

History of Windows 10

Windows 10 is already nearly 4 years old and improving all the time. Let's take a look at the main additions, changes and updates to Windows 10 from its launch in 2015, right up to the present day.

Windows 10 Launch

Given away free to users of older versions of Windows, 10 introduced new innovations like Cortana, Microsoft Edge and the Xbox app. Multitasking was made easier with the improvements to Snap Assist and the addition of Task View and the Action Center.

July 2015

Anniversary Update

The first major update of Windows 10 was known as the Anniversary update. The Edge browser had a massive overhaul with the ability to pin tab added, among much else. Edge extensions finally arrived, allowing users to add tools to Edge, such as AdBlock.

August 2016

Creators Update

The Creators update introduced several new Microsoft apps, along with some great improvements to system features and existing apps. Built-in game streaming was added, along with a new tab preview bar in Edge and the ability to set tabs aside for later.

April 2017

Fall Creators Update

The Fall Creators update brought lots of additions and changes to the OS, including completely redesigned core apps, new features such as OneDrive Files on Demand and the ability to pick up where you left off when switching between Windows 10 devices.

Late 2017

Spring Update

The Windows 10 Spring update brought improvements to the Edge browser, the introduction of the long-awaited Timeline feature, file sharing with nearby devices and much more. There were also several design changes to the overall look of Windows 10.

April 2018

October Update

The snappily named October update for Windows 10 wasn't a huge change, more a case of improving existing apps and features (Cortana tweaks, Dark Mode, Game Bar, etc.) with a couple of new additions thrown in, such as the Cloud Clipboard and Your Phone app.

October 2018

May Update

The May update, while not huge, brought several changes to the desktop, including a simplified Start menu and the separation of Cortana from the search bar. There were also several more design changes, updates to core apps and performance improvements.

May 2019

November Update

The November update to Windows 10 was another seemingly small update, with no new features added. There were some improvements and tweaks to existing apps and system tools, and, as always, several security improvements (if you need a reason to update, security should be it).

November 2019

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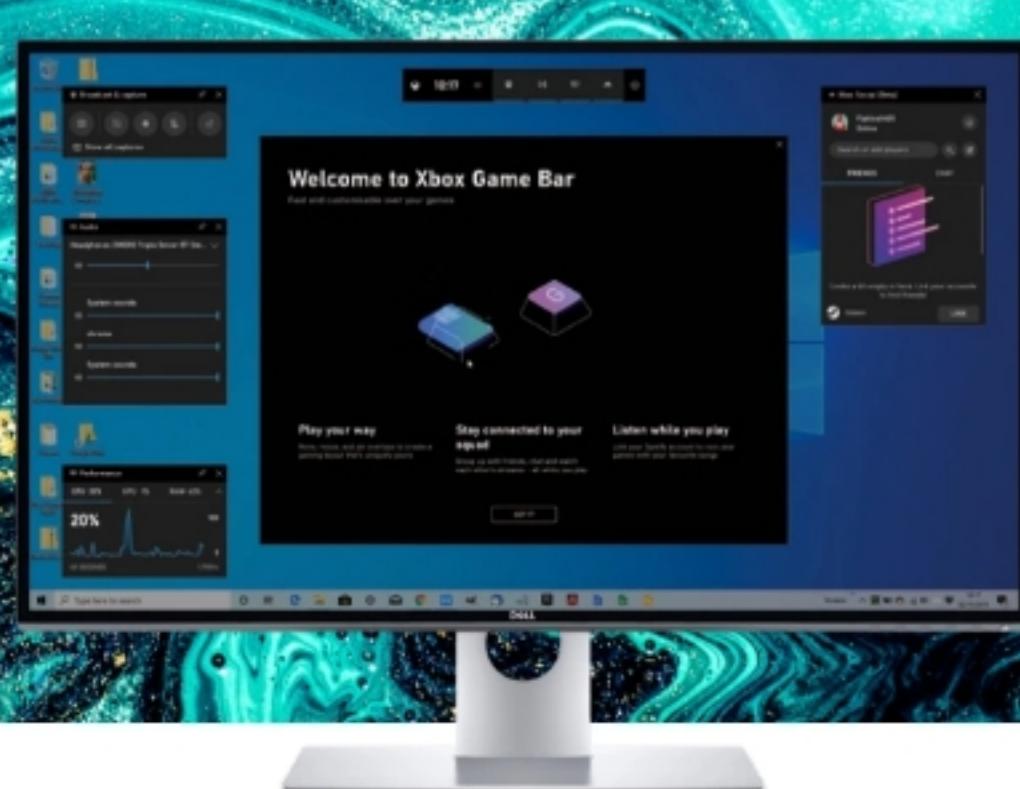
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With more games and entertainment than ever before.

The Complete
Windows 10
Manual

Welcome to The Complete Windows 10 Manual!

Inside you will find step-by-step guides designed to make getting the most from your computer effortless, with something new to learn on every page. From sending emails and chatting to Cortana, to customising the Start Menu and scanning for malware, this book is filled with guides, tutorials and tips that are perfect for anyone wanting to improve their understanding of Windows 10.

No matter if you are a long-time PC user or a complete Windows novice booting up your first laptop, there is something here for everyone! Including some of the most important elements of Windows 10, and something everyone who uses a computer online should know more about, the security and privacy features.

So, what are you waiting for? Turn the page and start to build your understanding of Windows 10!

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